



# \\(Nakano Seig\\bar{o}\\) and the Politics of Democracy, Empire and Fascism in Prewar and Wartime Japan

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## Nakano Seigō and the Politics of Democracy, Empire and Fascism in Prewar and Wartime Japan

### Abstract

The subject of this dissertation is the life and career of Nakano Seigō, a Japanese journalist and politician born in Fukuoka-city on the southwestern island of Kyūshū in 1886. Initially a liberal and a democrat, Nakano became enamored with European-style fascist movements in the 1930s and tried to start a similar political mass movement in Japan. Advocating a hard-line vis-à-vis America and England, Nakano supported Japan's entry into WW2. As early as mid-1942, however, he understood that Japan could not win the war and demanded that the government sue for peace – a position that put him into direct opposition with Japan's military. After being imprisoned briefly for his attempt to bring down the Tōjō cabinet in the summer of 1943, Nakano committed ritual suicide in October of the same year.

The dissertation focuses on Nakano's enchantment with European fascist movements – Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in particular - and his attempts to launch a similar movement in Japan. Nakano's attraction to fascism was, in part, a reaction to the international economic and political trends following the Great Depression but also reflected his life-long admiration for charismatic political leaders. His fascist leanings were also the result of a complex political calculation that aimed to exploit the appearance of the masses on Japan's political stage. The thesis argues that Nakano's attempt to launch a popular mass movement modeled on the European fascist movements failed both because Nakano's parties (first the Kokumin Dōmei, 1931-6 and then the Tōhōkai, 1937 – 1943) lacked ideological cohesion as well as truly totalitarian scope and because Nakano refused to resort to political violence as a means to achieve his political ends.

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Should I have forgotten to mention someone, I ask them to accept my apologies. Next time, drinks are on me.

*To my mother (1940 – 2007) and my father (1924 – 2008)*

## Introduction

The subject of this dissertation is the life and career of Nakano Seigō, a Japanese journalist and politician who was born in Fukuoka-city on the southwestern island of Kyūshū, Japan in 1886, but lived most of his adult life in Tokyo. Initially a liberal and democrat, Nakano became enamored with European-style fascist movements in the 1930s and actually tried to bring about a similar political mass movement in Japan. Advocating a hard-line vis-à-vis America and England, Nakano supported Japan's entry into the war. As soon as mid-1942, however, he understood that Japan could not win the war and demanded that it sue for peace, a position that put him into direct opposition with Japan's military. After having briefly been imprisoned for his attempt to bring down the Tōjō cabinet, Nakano committed ritual suicide in the fall of 1943.

Three possible answers come to mind to the question of why one would write a biography. First, because the life of the person in question was extraordinary. Second, because the life was important. Third, because the life was typical of a whole group or generation of people. To varying degrees, all three of these reasons apply in Nakano's case.

Nakano Seigō's life was certainly extraordinary. One would be hard-pressed to find among the Japanese party politicians of his generation someone who traveled more widely and met more statesmen than Nakano Seigō. His biography reads like the Who's Who of prewar Japan, and his travels also brought him into contact with many other Asian leaders such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, as well as European fascist leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini. Nor would it be easy to find another Japanese politician whose career was so full of zigs and zags. Who else was called a "Soviet Spy," "Japan's Hitler" and "anti-militarist," all while he was still alive? A search for examples of Japanese politicians who, already in 1942-3, demanded that Japan should surrender and were willing to give their life for that cause, one person appears on the list, and it is

Nakano Seigō. Finally, on the short roster of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japanese politicians who committed ritual suicide, Nakano's name appears yet again.

Was Nakano important? Here the answer is less clear. He never held a position in the executive branch of government for any extended period of time; his two short stints included two months as parliamentary councilor [参与官] in the ministry of Finance in early 1927 and nine months as vice-minister [政務次官] in the Communications Ministry within the Hamaguchi cabinet in 1929. As a member of parliament (which he was almost continuously from 1920 to his death in 1943), as the leader of a proto-fascist party in the 1930s, and also as a widely-published journalist and author of books on contemporary political affairs, he did, however, influence public opinion and political debate, and, through that, political decisions. Finally, Nakano may be said to be important in his legacy, for he – and, to a lesser degree, his contemporary Nagai Ryūtarō – was among the first politicians to introduce Japan to mass-based forms of political activism.

Was Nakano representative or typical of a group or generation of people? Here, one is tempted to lean toward the negative, for types tend toward the statistical mean Nakano tended toward the extreme. Yet, in more than one respect he was typical. His political career up to 1930 – with journalism as an entry point, a *jiban* powerbase in his electoral district, a seat in parliament, and membership in a party leading to a position in a ministry – was typical for liberal party politicians of his age. The challenges Nakano faced – including winning votes in an age of expanding suffrage, financing his political activities and election campaigns, and fighting and winning political power struggles – were also faced by most of his peers. It is in devising solutions to these problems that Nakano often broke out of the mold. Nakano's political views may also be said to have been typical: His liberalism, with its strong anti-*genrō* and anti-*hambatsu* slant, can be seen as an extension of one possible trajectory radiating out from the Meiji Popular Rights Movement and was typical of the liberal strand among the young

progressive reformers who populated the late Taishō and early Shōwa era political landscape. The same may be said about the evolution of Nakano's pan-Asianist views. Starting from a strong opposition to Western colonialism, Nakano, like many of his contemporaries, had little difficulty adjusting his interpretation of pan-Asianism to view Japan's colonial empire in a positive light - with all the contradictions that this ideological progression entailed. Anyone seeking an answer to the question of how one could simultaneously oppose Western colonialism and justify Japanese colonialism will find Nakano's intellectual development illuminating.

One might also ask why a scholar would undertake to write another biography of Nakano Seigō, given that one already exists in English and several exist in Japanese.<sup>1</sup> The answer lies in the fact that I seek to approach Nakano with different questions in mind. Initially, my interest was in studying relations between Japan and Germany, especially those before and during WW2. In so doing, I sought answers to questions such as: What was Japan's attraction to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy? What did Japanese citizens at the time think about Hitler and Mussolini? What did they know about concentration camps, the *Gestapo*, the *Arbeitsdienst*? With what motives did Japan enter an alliance with these powers – a regrettable decision that, to this day, causes Japan to be lumped together with and counted among the fascist powers, a categorization I believe is incorrect. Compared, for instance, to Oates' work, this biography therefore takes a closer and more detailed look at Nakano's so-called fascist period. While Nakano's life does not provide a

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<sup>1</sup> The English biography is by Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalism in Prewar Japan: a biography of Nakano Seigō*, (Sydney: Allen Unwin, 1985). In order of chronological appearance, the most important Japanese biographies on Nakano Seigō include: Satō Morio [佐藤守男], *Nakano Seigō*, [中野正剛], (Tokyo, Kasumigaseki-shobō; 1951), Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], *Why did Nakano Seigō commit suicide?* [中野正剛は何故自刀したか], (Tokyo, 1953), Nakano Yasuo [中野泰雄], *Biography of my father Nakano Seigō* [チチ中野正剛伝], (Tokyo, 1958), Inomata Keitarō [猪俣敬太郎], *The life of Nakano Seigō* [中野正剛の生涯] (Nagoya, 1964); Nakano, Yasuo [中野泰雄]; *Nakano Seigō: The Politician* [中野正剛政治家], 2 vols. (Tokyo, 1971), Tatamiya Eitarō [田田宮英太郎], *Nakano Seigō* [中野正剛], (Tokyo: Shinjimbutsu Orari-sha, 1975), Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], *The way of lion: Nakano Seigō* [獅子の道中野正剛], (Tokyo, 1986) and Ogata Taketora [緒方竹虎], *Nakano Seigō the Man* [人間中野正剛], (Tokyo, 1988).

conclusive answer to all of the above questions, it certainly gives us insight into some of the more important ones, for during this period Nakano was able to influence and lead public opinion.

Once I began studying Nakano in the 1930s and Japan's slippery road into the Pacific War, new questions arose - and one of the most important relates to the astonishing continuity in Japan's history in the years 1930-53. I say "astonishing" because, given the stress to which Japanese society was exposed (mobilization for war, defeat in war and occupation by a foreign power), the country during this period displays more continuities than say that of Germany, with which it is rightly or wrongly often compared. While the question of how continuities survived Japan's defeat and subsequent occupation has been extensively researched, the question of how Japan's government succeeded in mobilizing society for total war while making only a few alterations to the political system has received less attention.<sup>2</sup>

In simple terms, the question is the following: Mobilizing a society for war creates the opportunity to renegotiate the relationship between rulers and ruled, government and people, state and society<sup>3</sup>. In mobilizing for war, the state (government, rulers) must approach the people (often represented by parliament) to finance armaments. Depending on the kind of weaponry, army, navy, etc. used in the war, the state may also need the people's physical support (in the

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<sup>2</sup> A comprehensive account of Japan's defeat and the history under US occupation can be found in John W. Dower's "Embracing Defeat – Japan in the wake of World War II", (New York, 1999). The question how the process of mobilization impacted Japan's political system has been treated by Gordon M. Berger; "Parties out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Yamanouchi Yasushi, Koshmann, J. Victor, and Narita Ryūichi, eds. "Total War and Mobilization" (Ithaca, NY, 1998), and Lousie Young, "Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism" (Berkeley, Ca. 1998).

<sup>3</sup> The literature on this complex process of negotiation is vast. Good overviews are Bruce Porter, "War and the Rise of the State", (New York, 1995); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990*, (Oxford, England, 1990), Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making" in Tilly, Charles ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, (Princeton, 1975); and Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

form of soldiers, nurses, overtime work, etc.)<sup>4</sup>. In a time of total war – and the Pacific War was waged as total war – the state needs the totality of its citizens. In exchange, the state offers protection from a foreign aggressor. When such protection is not enough, the state may sometimes be forced to offer even more: new rights (e.g. suffrage), more powers (to parliament), or titles to land and wealth (usually taken from the conquered people). Depending on the accompanying (preceding) negotiation process, mobilization can lead either to a state having more power over its people or to the opposite – to the people wielding more power over the state. War can have emancipatory effects on a society or on group within society, even if such effects become apparent only after the war's end.

There is little doubt that, in the case of Japan preparing for WW2, these emancipatory effects did not materialize, for it was the state that was able to expand its power over the people, rather than vice versa. Among the nations participating in WW2, perhaps only Soviet Russia was able exact sacrifices from its people that compare to those demanded of the Japanese. Yet unlike Soviet Russia, Japan entered the 1930s as a democracy. How then was such a speedy and total reversal of the Japanese state's relationship to its citizens possible?

While the process certainly had more than one cause, the outcome of the negotiation process over how Japan was to mobilize - from above and not from below – does provide an important part of the explanation. Nakano was only one of the negotiators in this process, representing the interest of the people in parliament and advocating mobilization from below. If the people got such a raw deal, than among other reasons it is because Nakano – for reasons to be described below - failed miserably as a negotiator.

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<sup>4</sup> Various approaches to identify the determinant factors in this negotiation process (of which weaponry is just one) can be found in works of Stanislaw Andreski especially his *Military Organization and Society*; (Berkeley, 1971), but also his *Wars, Revolutions, Dictatorships: Studies of Historical and Contemporary Problems from a Comparative Viewpoint*, (London, 1992).

### **Some Comments on Technicalities**

A few comments on translations, transcriptions, quotes, and references: First, whenever Japanese terms were transcribed into roman letters, the Hepburn method of Romanization was used. The only exceptions are words and names so familiar to the Western reader (e.g. Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, etc.), that adhering to the Hepburn system might have been a source of misunderstanding.

Second, following common Japanese practice, personal names of Japanese people are written with the family name first, followed by the given name.

Third, often no transcription into roman letters is provided. The reader instead will find the original Japanese script. Thus, instead of writing: “Social Nationalism [shakai kokka-shugi],” the text reads: “Social Nationalism [社会国家主義].”

Forth, when translating from Japanese into English, I have on occasion also provided the Japanese original in square brackets following the translation. I did so in cases where I believe the translation did not do justice to the Japanese and I felt the need to provide the reader who is fluent in Japanese with a taste of the original.

Fifth, quotes are always in double quotation marks (e.g. “quote”), while quotes within quotes are in single quotation marks (e.g. “quote ‘quote within’ quote”). Comments by this author within a quote are always in square brackets (e.g. “quote [comment by the author] quote”).

Sixth, references: In the course of his life, Nakano Seigō met many people. Some of these personalities are so famous that I felt no need to explain who they were (e.g. Hitler, Mussolini, Itō Hirobumi, etc.). Many others were only secondary figures who may or may not be known to the reader – for these, I usually give some basic information in the footnotes and a more comprehensive in the biographic appendix at the end. Finally, there are many characters about whom nothing is known except their names and, accordingly, this is all I mention.



Seventh, for the main thread of the narrative, I relied heavily on four biographies. Accordingly, I have shortened the references in the footnotes as follows:

- “Oates” stands for “Oates, Leslie Russell; Populist Nationalism in prewar Japan: a biography of Nakano Seigō” (Sydney, 1985),
- “Ogata” stands for “Ogata, Taketora, “Nakano Seigō the Man” [人間中野正剛], (Tokyo: Chūkō Bunko, 1988)”
- “Inomata” stands for “Inomata, Keitarō, “The life of Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛の生涯], (Nagoya, 1964)” and
- “Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1” stands for “Nakano, Yasuo, “Nakano Seigō: The Politician” [中野正剛政治家] (Tokyo, 1971) vol. 1”.

Eighth, much of what Nakano wrote was published more than once – the usual pattern was publication in newspaper or magazine followed by publication in a book. Whenever possible, I have tried to mention both the original publication as well as the book published afterward.

## Chapter 1: Nakano's Youth and Education

### Fukuoka: Cradle of the Genyōsha

On the twelfth day of February, in the 19th year of Meiji (i.e., 1886), Nakano Taijirō and his wife Tora, who lived together at Nishiminato-chō 58 in Fukuoka-city on the southwestern island of Kyūshū, had the first of what eventually would be five children. They named their son Jintarō [甚太郎]. Later in life, he took on the name Seigō [正剛], by which he is known to posterity. Born in an age when Japan, recently opened to the world, was striving feverishly to catch up with the West, young Jintarō's generation fixed its gaze on the future and a hazy vision of modernity that was only slowly taking shape. At the same time, the world in which Jintarō grew up was still governed by forces, ideas and traditions that had their roots in Japan's past. Kyushu's heritage of radicalism was perhaps the most important of many historic influences on Nakano Seigō's political development. In telling the story of that heritage, it is perhaps best to start with the lives of Takaba Masayama [高場正山] and his daughter Osamu.

Takaba, a samurai and oculist physician in the service of the Kuroda-han of Fukuoka in the early 19th century, had long hoped for a son who could continue the family line. One after another, however, the children birthed by his wife were daughters. When in 1831 she gave birth to yet another girl, Masayama decided that, even so, he would make this child heir of the family line. Thus, his last daughter was given a boy's name, Yōrei [養命], dressed in boy's clothing and raised in every respect like a son. Like other boys, she celebrated her coming of age in a ceremony at twelve - she then changed her name to Osamu [乱].<sup>1</sup> The domain's authorities played

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<sup>1</sup> Takaba Osamu [高場乱] (1831 – 1891), educator. For a brief account of Takaba Osamu's life see the Fukuoka-ken Encyclopedia [福岡県百科事典], edited by Nishi-Nihon Shimbun-sha [西日本新聞社], 1982 or the longer popularized account in Nagahata Michiko [永畑道子], "Rin – Outstanding Women of Modern Japan-Takaba Osamu" [凛—近代日本の女魁—高場乱] (Tokyo, 1997).

along and, eventually, Tabaka's daughter was even given the right to carry two swords, a privilege usually limited to the male samurai.<sup>2</sup>

A gifted student, Takaba Osamu was sent to the Kamei-juku [亀井塾] led by Kamei Shōyō [亀井昭陽]. The school's motto was "freedom" [自由] and it stood out from other schools in that it offered not only an orthodox Confucian curriculum but also Dutch learning. Unusually, the school also accepted both male and female pupils. Talent combined with hard work made Takaba stand out among the school's students and, to this day, she is remembered as one of the "Four Kings of the Kamei School" [亀門の四天王]. After completing her studies, she continued her father's work, practicing medicine in Fukuoka.

In 1853, the arrival of Commodore Perry's Black ships in Edo bay and the ensuing threat that Japan could suffer domination at the hands of a foreign power threw the country's political world into crisis. As officials at every level of government discussed how to deal with the foreign threat, Takaba Osamu determined that she too had to make a contribution to Japan's political survival. Being barred from entry into politics on account of her gender, she decided to open a school and educate young men who would act in her place. To this end, she founded the Kōshi-juku [興志塾], colloquially known as the "Ginseng Field School" [人参畑塾] because it was built on a piece of ground formerly used to grow Korean ginseng.

Within Fukuoka domain and later Fukuoka prefecture, the Ginseng Field School came to play the role of incubator of radical political activists, much like that played by Yoshida Shōin's school in the Chōshū domain. Perhaps this was so because Takaba Osamu, in spite of her own delicate build, accepted hooligans and roughneck students whom she intended to civilize.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Though extremely rare, raising a daughter in this fashion had some precedent. In the Akitsuki branch domain of the Kuroda domain, Hara Saihin [原菜蘋] had also been raised like a boy.

<sup>3</sup> In her chosen name the character "Ran" [乱] means "war, rebellion" but her reading of it namely "Osamu", means "to calm" or "to pacify."

Students who, on account of their unruly behavior, had been turned away elsewhere found an open door at the Ginseng Field School. Accordingly, the school may have schooled a high proportion of young men to whom violence was an acceptable means of attaining a given goal.

Or perhaps the school was an incubator for radicalism because Takaba Osamu's teachings placed great weight on the ideas of Wang Yang-ming, which underpinned a heterodox strand of neo-Confucianism known in Japan as Yōmeigaku [陽明学].<sup>4</sup> Unlike the orthodox interpretations of Confucianism, with their rational approach and strong emphasis on respect for socio-political hierarchies, Wang Yang-ming's approach was intuitive. He presupposed that, by nature, man had innate knowledge of good and evil. Accordingly, he believed that moral understanding could not be achieved through rational study of the outside world, but rather through meditative introspection and following one's intuition.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Wang rejected that moral understanding could exist without action. His concept of the unity of knowledge and action [知行合一 also 知行一致] affirmed that knowledge is the beginning of action, and action is the completion of knowledge.

It is not difficult to see that Wang's teachings contained the seeds of rebellion - perhaps even revolution. His axiomatic statement of man's moral autonomy could free the individual from outside authorities. The unity of knowledge and action implied not only the right, but even the duty, to act upon one's intuition - if necessary also against worldly powers. In Japan, these revolutionary seeds, which had lain dormant on Chinese soil, bore fruit. Among the rebels of the

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<sup>4</sup> Wang Yang-ming [王陽明] (1472 - 1529), known in Japan as Ōyōmei was a scholar, bureaucrat, educator and general of Ming China. For a concise introduction to his life and thought see Siu-chi Huang, "Essentials of Neo-Confucianism – eight major philosophers of the Song and Ming periods" (Westport, Conn., 1999), pp. 191 – 212.

<sup>5</sup> One is tempted to translate Wang's concept 'intuition' with the word 'conscience', if only the latter did not carry such a heavily religious meaning deeply rooted in the western tradition. Perhaps one should follow the example of Nakae Tōju who introduced Wang Yang-ming's philosophy into Japan and called this moral intuition the "divine light from heaven." See Theodore de Bary et al. editor, "Sources of East Asian Tradition" (New York, 2008), p. 160.

Tokugawa and early Meiji period we find many followers of Wang's philosophy, most famously Saigō Takamori, Yoshida Shōin and, to a lesser degree, Ōshio Heihachirō.<sup>6</sup>

We do not know whether Takaba's students were radicalized by Wang Yang-ming's philosophy, or whether they had been radical to start with and used his teachings as means of legitimizing their views and subsequent actions. A combination of both seems plausible. What we do know is that the Ginseng Field School produced an unusually large number of political activists and Yōmeigaku followers who played important roles in the affairs of Fukuoka domain (later prefecture) and, in some instances, even in national politics.

The most famous – or depending on one's point of view, most infamous – of Takaba's students was Tōyama Mitsuru, who eventually came to be known as the doyen of the Japanese right wing.<sup>7</sup> Born into a family of low-ranking samurai in Fukuoka, Tōyama entered the Ginseng Field School in 1871. Four years later, inspired by Itagaki Taisuke's "Risshisha," he joined some of his fellow students – notably Hakoda Rokusuke, Shintō Kiheita, Hiraoka Kōtarō, Narahara Itaru, Miyagawa Ta'ichirō, Takebe Koshirō, and Ōchi Hikoshirō<sup>8</sup> – in founding the "Rectifying Aims Society" [矯志社].

The motives that united and drove these young samurai – generally, the preservation of their historic place in society – were not unique to them, their school, or Fukuoka, but were shared by many samurai throughout Japan. Having toppled the Tokugawa *bakufu* and restored imperial rule in 1867-8, the new leaders of Japan – mostly young samurai from the four domains of

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<sup>6</sup> On Wang Yang-ming's philosophy and its reception in Japan by Nakae Tōju and Kumazawa Banzan, see W. Theodore de Bary et al. editor, "Sources of East Asian Tradition" (New York, 2008), p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> Tōyama Mitsuru [頭山満] (1855-1944) Right-wing political leader, advocate of Japanese expansion on the Asian continent, and a founder of a number of ultra-nationalist groups such as the Genyōsha, Kokuryūkai etc, Tōyama was to become one of Nakano's most influential mentors.

<sup>8</sup> Hakoda Rokusuke [箱田 六輔] (1850 – 1888); Shintō Kiheita [進藤喜平太] (1850-1925); Hiraoka Kōtarō [平岡浩太郎] (1851 – 1906); Narahara Itaru [奈良原至] (1857-1917); Miyagawa Ta'ichirō [宮川 太一郎] (1847 - 1909); Takebe Koshirō [武部小四郎] (1846 - 1877); Ochi Hikoshirō [越智彦四郎] (1849 – 1877).

Chōshū, Satsuma, Tosa, and Hizen - set out on a program of reform and modernization aimed nominally at shaking up the old social order. But what to the new Meiji government was meant to be a modernizing drive was, in the eyes much of Japan's warrior class, a threat to the samurai's traditional economic, social and political status.

In 1869, the government reduced the many ranks of the samurai class to just two, the higher-ranking *shizoku* and the lower-ranking *sotsu*. Then, in August of 1871, the Meiji leaders abolished the ancient domains and created prefectures in their place; these prefectures were no longer ruled by their former *daimyō* but by centrally-appointed governors. At the same time, the Meiji government also reduced the stipends of the domains' samurai. In 1872, the government reclassified a good part of the lower-ranking *sotsu* as commoners. The following year, the Meiji rulers went a step further, taxing the remaining samurais' stipends and introducing a program under which stipends could be converted into bonds (usually at a loss, which explains why only few samurai accepted the offer). The outcome of the debate over the Korean question - that is, whether or not to send a punitive expedition to Korea - crushed any hope that the new government would employ the samurai in their traditional role as warriors. It became clear to the more far-sighted among the samurai that the new Meiji polity had no use, no place and no money for them.

The samurais' discontent over the gradual erosion of their status was lent additional acidity by the fact that the new government, in its recruitment practices, displayed a marked preference for men from the four restoration domains of Chōshū, Satsuma, Hizen, and Tosa (though especially the former two). This favoritism took such extreme forms that samurai from across Japan feared the new government - despite its rhetoric of imperial restoration, modernization and meritocracy - was in fact re-establishing a sort of *bakufu*, with all its vices and problems. The only difference, in this case, was that instead of being a Tokugawa *bakufu*, it would be a Satchō *bakufu*.

Because of Fukuoka's role in the *bakumatsu* years, the domain (later prefecture) did not belong to the restorationist camp. Although not vassals of the Tokugawa, the house of Kuroda had fought on Tokugawa side at Sekigahara and subsequently been rewarded with one of the larger domains in Japan.<sup>9</sup> Though one might expect that the domain would therefore have been predisposed to side with the Tokugawa *bakufu*, there had been in Fukuoka –as in many other domains – a vociferous restoration faction in the *bakumatsu* years. Takaba Osamu, incidentally, had sided with that faction. The struggle between the restoration and pro-Tokugawa factions remained unsettled until 1865, when the former was bloodily suppressed. The restoration leader, senior councilor Katō Shisho<sup>10</sup>, was forced to commit suicide with six other members, while 14 more were executed and another 15 exiled. The Tokugawa loyalists prevailed and when, three years later, the restoration forces emerged victorious from the struggles against the Tokugawa shogunate, the Kuroda domain found itself on the losing side.

Fukuoka domain had entered modernity on the wrong foot, so to speak. The neighboring domains of Chikugo<sup>11</sup> and Buzen,<sup>12</sup> which together with the Kuroda domain's Chikuzen<sup>13</sup> were

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<sup>9</sup> By productive capacity, the Kuroda domain was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> (smaller than Satsuma but larger than Chōshū) with an officially listed productive capacity (*omote-daka*) of 520,000 *koku* of rice. See Albert M. Craig, “Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration” (Cambridge Ma., 1961), p. 11 (Table 1).

<sup>10</sup> Katō Tokunari [加藤徳成] usually known as Katō Shisho [加藤司書] (1830-1865), was a samurai of the Fukuoka-han and at the center of Sonnō Jōi activism within the administration of the same domain. He advanced to the position of Karō [家老] in 1865. When the Tokugawa-loyalists got the upper hand, he was forced to resign and commit ritual suicide [*seppuku*].

<sup>11</sup> The land of Chikugo [筑後] comprised the domains of Kurume [久留米藩] (with its branch domain Matsuzaki [松崎藩]) Yanagawa [梁河藩], and Miike [三池藩].

<sup>12</sup> The land of Buzen [豊前] was comprised of the Nakatsu domain [中津藩], the Kogura domain [小倉藩] (later renamed Kawara domain [香春藩] and then again renamed Toyotsu domain [豊津藩]), and its branch domain Chizuka [千束藩].

<sup>13</sup> The land of Chikuzen [筑前] was ruled over by the Kuroda domain [黒田藩], and its two branch domains, namely the Tōrenji domain [東蓮寺藩] and the Akizuki domain [秋月藩].

soon to be incorporated into Fukuoka prefecture, had not fared any better.<sup>14</sup> Nor did Fukuoka's standing in the Meiji polity improve when it was found the Kuroda domain had been involved in counterfeiting the new government's bank notes. During the early years of the Meiji period, the samurai of Fukuoka prefecture therefore found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to watch helplessly as their traditional role within society was being undone, while the new government offered them no rewarding alternative.

It was to rectify these real or perceived injustices that the students of the Ginseng Field School founded the "Rectifying Aims Society" [矯志社] in 1875. When, in the following year, the government set out to finalize the dismantling of the samurai's privileged position through abolishing Japan's classes [秩禄処分], converting all samurai stipends into bonds and prohibiting sword-carrying [廃刀令], samurai unrest erupted in a series of rebellions concentrated in the southwest that culminated in the Satsuma rebellion of 1877. Whenever possible, the members of the Rectifying Aims Society participated in these rebellions.

Hakoda, Tōyama, Shintō, and several others fought in the Hagi rebellion [萩の乱] of October 1876 and were subsequently imprisoned. This imprisonment likely saved their lives, for in the following year they were unable to join - and perhaps die in - the larger Satsuma rebellion under Saigō Takamori's leadership. Less fortunate were Takebe and Ōchi who, inspired by the rebellion in nearby Satsuma, raised and led a force of 850 samurai in what came to be known as the Fukuoka disturbance [福岡の変]. They survived the fighting and tried to join the Satsuma rebels, but were captured on the way and executed. Hiraoka, who accompanied them, survived by luck and in the chaos following the disturbance's suppression made his way into the camp of the

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<sup>14</sup> Kurume domain and its branch Matsuzaki domain had participated in both punitive expeditions against Chōshū. Among the domains which later were incorporated in Fukuoka prefecture, only Yanagawa domain fought on the side of the Restoration forces.



Satsuma rebels. There he served as staff officer under Saigō Takamori, survived the bloody suppression of that rebellion and, after a year of prison, returned to Fukuoka.

After this last and largest samurai rising was suppressed, even the most thick-headed resisters understood that the Meiji government could not be overthrown by open rebellion. This, however, did not mean the end of samurai discontent – or, for that matter, of samurai violence. Pushed out of their traditional profession and unable to find employment in the new administration, the majority of samurai was forced to seek alternative sources of income in trade, commerce, industry, farming, education, or elsewhere - and not all were successful in their new careers. The loss of privilege, status and economic livelihood caused resentment against the new state to fester in the hearts of many. The fact that the new government maintained its preference for men from Satsuma and Chōshū in its appointments, a practice that persisted even after the introduction of civil service examinations in 1887, continued to enrage those kept outside government.

With open rebellion no longer an option, political activism in Japan took more peaceful forms – though violence continued to feature prominently. The period after 1877, in particular 1879-81, saw the establishment of various political societies that sought to attain their political aims by holding rallies, mobilizing the common people and submitting petitions (sometimes signed by thousands of citizens) to the central government demanding the establishment of a representative parliament and a constitution, as well as the revision of the unequal treaties concluded with the Western Powers. Many of the discontented former samurai, who until 1877 had sought to retain and then regain their lost privileges and in that sense may be called reactionary, now turned progressive (however superficial this may have been), incorporated liberal democratic and constitutional ideals into their rhetoric, and tried to ride the wave of what soon came to be known as the Freedom and People's Rights Movement.

Again, the surviving members of the Rectifying Aims Society were no exception to these wider trends. In 1879, Tōyama Mitsuru, Hakoda Rokusuke, Shintō Kiheita, and Hiraoka Kōtarō founded a political society called Kōyōsha.<sup>15</sup> Renamed Genyōsha<sup>16</sup> in 1881, the society's members were bound by its program to honor the imperial household, protect the country and guard the people's rights.

Over the course of its long existence – the Genyōsha was not dissolved until 1946, under orders of the US occupation forces - the society's members engaged in activities that went well beyond its original program. Domestically, the Genyōsha soon moved away from the liberal rhetoric of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement even as the society maintained its hostile stance toward the Meiji leaders' monopoly on power, often referring to the authorities disparagingly as Satchō cliques [Satchō *batsuzoku* 薩長閥族 or Satchō *hambatsu* 薩長藩閥]. The society also became notorious for its brutality, as it interfered bloodily in the general election of 1892 on behalf of the pro-government party, suppressed violently the Fukuoka labor movement (the society financed its activities with the profits derived from coal mines near Fukuoka) and was involved in the attempted assassination of Foreign Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu in 1889.<sup>17</sup>

In international affairs, the Genyōsha advocated a militant pan-Asianism and supported anti-colonial independence movements throughout Asia.<sup>18</sup> After 1901, the society's overseas

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<sup>15</sup> Oates translates Kōyōsha [向陽社] literally as “Sun-Facing Society.” See Oates, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> The name Genyōsha [玄洋社] may loosely be translated as “Dark Sea Society” but is probably a reference from the Japanese name for the straits between Kyūshū and Honshū, which is locally known as Genkai-nada [玄海灘]. Hence Oates' translation as “Genkai Sea Society” gets pretty close to its meaning (see p. 3). Throughout this text I have simply maintained the Japanese “Genyōsha” for this is how the society is best known, even in the English literature.

<sup>17</sup> The assassin, Kurushima Tsuneki [来島恒喜] (1859-1889), had come into contact with the Genyōsha radicals at Takaba's Ginseng-Field School. He killed himself immediately after carrying out his attempted assassination of Ōkuma.

<sup>18</sup> Like many political societies founded at the time, the Genyōsha opposed Western imperialism in general and Japan's unequal treaties in particular. The society advocated that Japan strengthen herself militarily in order to regain and maintain full sovereignty but also to support independence fighters in other

activities were channeled through the affiliated Kokuryūkai.<sup>19</sup> The Genyōsha's longevity and influence in Japanese politics is partly explained by its financial muscle, which in turn was a function of Fukuoka's growing economic importance within Meiji Japan. On account of Fukuoka's proximity to the Asian mainland – the Korean port of Pusan lies just across the straits of Korea – trade, which had been dormant under the Tokugawa's seclusion policy, flourished again. The coal extracted from the mines nearby – Japan's largest - fuelled the steam engines that drove ships, trains and factory machines during the early stages of Japan's industrial development.

While Tōyama concentrated from the outset on politics, Hiraoka Kōtarō, the Genyōsha's first president, was instrumental in leveraging Fukuoka's wealth on the society's behalf. Hiraoka had entered the coal business and made a fortune operating the Chikuhō [筑豊] coal mines of northern Fukuoka prefecture. He used those profits to finance the Genyōsha's activities, most notably its operations on the Asian mainland but also its newspaper, the *Fukuryō Shimpō*, which was founded in 1887 and presided over by Tōyama.<sup>20</sup>

With the deaths of the more liberal-minded Hakoda in 1888 and Hiraoka in 1906, the society fell increasingly under the sway of Tōyama Mitsuru, who gave the group its radically conservative, right-wing direction, so much so that among historians, the Genyōsha is known as the mother of all pre-war right-wing societies in Japan. Even though Tōyama never held an official position in government or parliament, his reliance on semi-legal and often outright illegal methods - which gave rise to a plethora of rumors surrounding both his person and the society -

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Asian nations (e.g. China's Sun Yat-sen, India's Rash Behari Bose, or Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy from the Philippines). This took various forms, ranging from providing shelter and financial support to exiles living in Japan, all the way to actually supplying arms to the militant anti-colonial movements overseas.

<sup>19</sup> The Kokuryūkai [黒竜会], alternatively translated as “Amur River Society” or “Black Dragon Society” was founded in 1901 by Genyōsha member, Uchida Ryōhei [内田良平] (1874-1937). After 1901, the Kokuryūkai served as a vehicle to support independence movements overseas, notably the Chinese republicans under Sun Yat-sen in the 1911 Chinese revolution.

<sup>20</sup> The *Fukuryō Shimpō* [福陵新報] was renamed *Kyūshū Nippō* [九州日報] in 1898 and *West Japan Journal* [西日本新聞] after merging with the *Fukuoka Daily News* [福岡日日新聞] in 1942.

made Tōyama a powerful and much-feared behind-the-scenes player in pre-war Japanese politics. Thus, long after his official retirement, Tōyama was able to influence Japan's foreign and domestic politics and maintain his standing as the grand old man of Japanese nationalism, reigning over right-wing groups and societies he had helped bring into existence.

### **Nakano Seigō**

It was into this world, - a world populated by once-proud samurai, now demoted and trying to recover lost status and power<sup>21</sup>; a world inhabited by coal barons, Genyōsha-led Pan-Asian activists, Yōmeigaku-inspired rebels, and anti-government terrorists; a world in which national holidays were noticed but only the anniversary of the Satsuma rebellion was celebrated<sup>22</sup> - that Nakano Seigō was born on February 12, 1886. Nakano was the first-born son, followed by two sisters - Mura, [ムラ] and Teru [テル] - and three brothers, Yasusuke [泰介], Takeo [武雄], and Hideto [秀人]. Takeo died as a young child, leaving the family with five children.

### **Father**

Twenty-eight at the time of Nakano Seigō's birth, Nakano Taijirō<sup>23</sup> was descended from a

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<sup>21</sup> At times, the status consciousness of the Fukuoka samurai took embarrassingly vain forms. When following the Meiji reforms a town meeting was held to decide on a new name for their city, it looked for a moment as if city would take the name of the Hakata, that part of the city formerly inhabited by merchants and craftsmen. Had it not been for a band of angry samurai crashing the meeting and intimidating the attendees, the merchants would have had their way. In the end, and much to the satisfaction of the Fukuoka samurai, the city kept the name of the castle-town, Fukuoka.

<sup>22</sup> While it would be mistaken to speak of Fukuoka prefecture as a particularly rebellious one (in terms of numbers of uprisings during Meiji times, Fukuoka prefecture did not even rank among the top ten prefectures. See Roger W. Bowen, "Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan" (Berkeley, 1980), p. 76-77, Table 2.), there was a culture of folkloristic support for the rebels of the 1870s. Thus, those who had fallen fighting on the side of the government were commemorated in a lukewarm fashion on a national holiday May 10, but popular participation was much more enthusiastic on April 27, when those who had given their lives fighting in the rebellions of the 1870s were commemorated. See Inomata, p. 27-8.

<sup>23</sup> Nakano's father, Nakano Taijirō [中野泰次郎] had been born in 1858 and died in 1928. His first name can alternatively also be pronounced Yasujirō. The reading Taijirō has been used in Oates' biography of

low-ranking samurai family of the Kuroda-han. Before the Meiji reforms of the 1870s, the Nakano family had held the office of *o-funa-kata* [御船方], which made them responsible for the maintenance of the domain's ships and boats in Fukuoka harbor. The position carried a meager stipend of 7 *koku* 1 *totsu* and 5 *masu* of rice per year. Though of low rank, the Nakanos were proud of their lineage.<sup>24</sup> But by the time Nakano Seigō was born, the Meiji reforms had stripped Taijirō of both his status and his stipend, and instead of overseeing Fukuoka's harbor, he worked in his brother's pawnshop.<sup>25</sup> Initially, the shop earned so little that the family was forced to live under one roof with Nakano's uncle, but three years later business picked up and Nakano's immediate family moved to 46 *banchi* in the Nishimachi district of Fukuoka. There, they opened their own pawnshop under the name "Iribune-ya" [入船屋]. This business supported the family well enough during Nakano's youth so that the family was "by no means poor."<sup>26</sup> It was not until Nakano's teens that the family business grew weaker, before failing altogether after he moved to Tokyo to study at university.

Nakano's father does not seem to have been an impressive or strong personality. After the family business failed, the entire family moved to Tokyo, where they were supported by Nakano. His father never worked again. Only seldom is he mentioned in Nakano's writings and, accordingly, we know little about him. What is recorded is mostly trivial, such as the fact that because of his former occupation in Fukuoka's harbor he was good at swimming (his grandson

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Nakano and for the sake of consistency it has been maintained.

<sup>24</sup> Neither in terms of rank nor in terms of stipend, can Nakano's family be considered to have been high-ranking. In all likelihood, his forefathers probably never met face-to-face with Lord Kuroda and they were certainly never involved in political decision-making processes. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 131.

<sup>25</sup> Nakano's uncle, Nakano Washirō [中野和四郎] (1849-1909), seems to have been somewhat more successful as a business man than Nakano's father. A member of the Hataka Chamber of Commerce, he also served as a member of the Fukuoka city council.

<sup>26</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, volume 1. p. 45.

remembers him for being able to write with a brush while swimming<sup>27</sup>) or that he liked to reenact famous battles using clay soldiers and landscapes made of sand. The few anecdotes that stand out from this triviality cast Nakano's father in a mixed light. On at least two occasions he purposely broke musical instruments that Nakano was playing – once by actually hitting Nakano over the head with a flute until it broke.<sup>28</sup> How this influenced Nakano's relationship toward his father is not known. What is clear is that this incident put an end to Nakano's musical education. Many years later, Nakano would write: "My inability to understand music is so complete that even my own children call me tone deaf [音痴]." <sup>29</sup>

### **Mother**

Nakano's mother, Tora<sup>30</sup>, 20 when Nakano was born, invariably claimed to hail from a sake-brewing family, though her father, Tō Matakurō [党又九郎], had diversified into soy-sauce-brewing. Like Nakano, she had been the first-born child in the family and, like him, she was outspoken and strong-willed. The similarity of character may explain why Nakano loved his mother so dearly. Throughout his life, she was the center of his affection and worries. When away from home for the first time as a student in Tokyo, he spent sleepless nights fretting about her poor health – concerns that proved groundless, as she outlived him by a couple of years.<sup>31</sup> The same fears later followed Nakano whenever he traveled abroad. When he spent a year studying in

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. vol. 1, p. 461.

<sup>28</sup> The other instrument was a *biwa*, a Japanese lute, which Nakano bought before graduating from school. See Ibid. vol. 1, p. 47 and p. 61.

<sup>29</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Hold on, Father" [シッカリシロ・チチ] in Nakano Seigō, "Expressions of the Soul" [魂を吐く] (Tokyo, 1938), p. 333.

<sup>30</sup> Nakano's mother Tora [トラ] had been born in 1866 and died grief-struck two years after Nakano's death in late August 1945.

<sup>31</sup> See Ogata, p. 9-10.

England, only a few of the letters that he wrote home lack some expression of concern for his mother's health.<sup>32</sup> Even on the evening before his suicide, one of his greatest worries was that the death of his mother's eldest son would cause her great grief.

By comparison, Nakano's relationship with his father was weak, shallow, colorless, and characterized by indifference. Taijirō was neither a source of pride nor an object of great respect. Nakano turned for role models to the legends and tales of Japan's past. Foremost among these was the already-mentioned Saigō Takamori, leader of the Meiji Restoration and the ill-fated Satsuma rebellion. A close second was Ōshio Heihachirō, leader of an equally ill-fated uprising in Osaka during the Tempo famines of the 1830s.

### **Siblings**

Being the first-born son – a fact that in Japan as in many other cultures carries special privileges and responsibilities – meant Nakano enjoyed a paramount position among his siblings. This position was never challenged, neither by Nakano's sisters nor by his brothers, who were born seven and twelve years after him and hence were much too young to pose any competitive threat. If initially Nakano enjoyed this position (which meant, among other things, being served first and most at table) thanks to luck, in later years he earned and maintained it through hard work. When his father's business failed, young Nakano – then still a student at Waseda University – moved the family to Tokyo and from then onward took charge of the family's finances. Though probably as gifted as Nakano, it took time for his siblings to develop their own independent lives and step out of the long shadow cast by their eldest brother.

Compared with Nakano's career, those of his siblings pale. Mura, the oldest daughter, entered a teacher's school in 1909, married a middle-school teacher called Yoshimura Yatarō [吉

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<sup>32</sup> While studying in England, Nakano wrote regularly to his family. Sometimes he would give medical advice and once after having received word that his mother was fine, he replied that "this is the happiest day in a long time." See Nakano Yasuo, volume 1, p. 187-205; the quote can be found on p. 198.

村弥太郎] and thereafter led the life of a housewife. When the Nakano family moved to Tokyo in 1908, she was the only one to stay behind in Fukuoka. Nakano's second sister, Teru, married an army officer called Takeda Takayoshi [竹田隆吉] in 1912 and, like her elder sister, became a housewife.<sup>33</sup> When her husband died of disease, their son, Takeda Toshiyuki [竹田敏行], then a middle-school student, came to live with Nakano in Tokyo. Nakano's brother Yasusuke graduated from Waseda University in 1912, later worked for the *Kyūshū Daily* [九州日報] and from 1933 on served in the Fukuoka City assembly. For many years while Nakano served as an MP in Tokyo, Yasusuke also cultivated Nakano's electoral base in Fukuoka. Hideto, the youngest, and the bohemian artist in the family, first followed in Seigō's footsteps by studying political science at Waseda University, but quit before graduating and eventually became a published poet and novelist and after the war started to paint.<sup>34</sup>

### Character as a Child

Not everything we know of Nakano as a child is flattering. He ate a lot and ate fast - whenever food went missing in the household he was the first to be suspected of having stolen it. He was unwilling (or unable) to restrain his appetite when eating with others. Perhaps because of his dominant position among his siblings, Nakano never learned what it meant to share a meal. Those who dined with him even as an adult noticed that eating *shabu-shabu* – which, along with *sukiyaki*, was among his favorite dishes - with Nakano meant choosing between wolfing down raw meat (as he did) or risking not getting any meat at all.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For information on the lives of Nakano's two sisters see Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 129 and 459.

<sup>34</sup> Nakano Hideto [中野秀人] (1898-1966) poet and painter.

<sup>35</sup> Mitamura Takeo, who subsequently became a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai political party, later recalled: "Nakano really liked beef Sukiyaki. He often invited me. Nakano would eat his *sukiyaki* almost raw. ... Nakano would boil the meat only very briefly, and then eat it. Moreover he would eat a lot. While the two of us [Mitamura and Sugiura] were still waiting for our meat to boil, he would clean the plate all



The only surprising thing about Nakano's eating habits was that they never caused him to gain weight. Fragile as a child, Nakano would maintain a delicate build throughout his life. Described as neither handsome nor ugly, as an adult Nakano stood about 1.7 meters tall and weighed only 60 kilograms.<sup>36</sup> No matter how much he ate or how much he practiced *jūdō*, his muscles got stronger but never increased in volume. His thinness often made him a target of jokes, but he knew how to defend himself. When a dorm-mate made fun of Nakano's slim build, Nakano retorted quickly with a poem:

“Slender the crane flies in the sky,  
while fat pigs wallow in the mud.”<sup>37</sup>

On a different occasion, Nakano countered a taunt by saying: “I don't like really fat people. It is the skinny ones, with sharp eyes and talents, who will work for the good of the country.”<sup>38</sup> Not everyone agreed, however, and Nakano's slender build continued to invite insults. When he appeared for the first time in the Diet in 1920, Okamoto Ippei from the *Asahi News* drew a caricature with the subtitle: “The under-nourished fox” [栄養不足の狐].<sup>39</sup>

As a child, Nakano is also said to have been a “*kikanbō*” [きかん坊]<sup>40</sup> - that is, a child who

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alone. We did not have enough time to eat. And when he was stuffed he would say: ‘Well shall we go then??’” Mitamura, Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刀したか] (Tokyo, 1953), p. 131.

<sup>36</sup> As an adult Nakano weighed 16 *kan* [貫 ≈ 3.75 kg] corresponding to about 60 kg and stood 5 *shaku* [尺 ≈ 30.3 cm] 6 *sun* [寸 ≈ 3.03 cm] tall corresponding to 1.70 meters or roughly 5 feet 7 inches. See Inomata p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Nakano Seigō “Spit and Rubble” [呌唾瓦礫] in *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], March 1908, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 71.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Inomata, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 45.

does not listen to, let alone obey, what he is told. Toward his father he is said to have been especially rebellious, perhaps encouraged partly by the example of his mother, who was not the obedient wife valued so highly by Confucian morals. Rebelliousness was a character trait that would stay with Nakano throughout his life, as was bellicosity. Put simply, young Jintarō liked a good fight and took particular joy in its physical intensity. The practice of *jūdō* channeled, contained and, so to speak, civilized Nakano's aggressiveness in later years but did not keep him from participating in the many brawls that were a recurrent feature of parliamentary debate in pre-war Japan.

Overwhelmingly remembered as a bad loser<sup>41</sup>, Nakano did not enjoy games such *shōgi* or *igo*, or sports such as tennis or baseball.<sup>42</sup> As a child, he liked either to play war games with neighborhood children – usually acting as commander-in-chief – or simply to pick a fight. On occasion, the pleasure he derived from fighting took cruder forms: Nakano's son Yasuo described his father as someone who liked animals – he kept goldfish in a pond he dug in the family garden and loved horses all his life – but adds that, as a child, his favorite animals were dogs and cocks because they could be made to fight against one another.<sup>43</sup> Well into his forties, Nakano would set his dogs to fight against others and lose all interest in and affection for them if they lost.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Nakano's love of a good fight was even stronger than his appetite for meat. More than once, on his return from the butcher where he had been sent to fetch some meat, Nakano would throw the meat into a pack of dogs just to watch them fight over it. Likewise, the dogs Nakano kept as a

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<sup>41</sup> Inomata describes Nakano as a “bad loser by birth”[生まれつき負けず嫌い]. See Inomata, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> The middle school that Nakano frequented between the age of 14 and 20 offered tennis, baseball and other sports, but Nakano only participated in martial art activities, mostly *jūdō* and sometimes *kendō*. For sports offered at Nakano's middle school see Nagahama Shigamo [長浜重磨] “Remembering the Shūyūkan” [修猷館の思い出] in The two hundred year history of the Shūyūkan [修猷館二百年史]; ed. Haraoka Tetsuji [原岡鐵二] et al. (Fukuoka, 1985), p. 522-23.

<sup>43</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> See Ibid, vol. 2, p. 101.

child had been selected on account of their strength; he often ordered them to “bite” [がませる] other dogs. It is hardly surprising, then, that Nakano had a reputation as a neighborhood “bad boy” [悪そうな息子].<sup>45</sup>

### Schooling

Nakano’s unruly behavior got him sent to school at the age of five, one year earlier than normal. His parents hoped that school would straighten him out, but the result is unclear. All we are told about Nakano’s four years at the local primary school was that he slept during classes and woke up only when the bell announced the break.<sup>46</sup> Nakano’s scholastic performance, however, does not seem to have suffered and he graduated on time.

In April 1895, he advanced to the higher course at the Fukuoka Teacher Training Primary School [福岡県立師範付属小学校], where his interest in learning was first aroused thanks to his Chinese teacher, Shibata Fumishirō,<sup>47</sup> one of the few people for whom Nakano felt life-long admiration and respect. Shibata, a patriot and nephew of Tōyama Mitsuru, gained his pupils’ affection by taking them on frequent outings. As a Chinese teacher, Shibata laid the groundwork for Nakano’s life-long interest in the Chinese classics and introduced him to Confucianism, in particular the ideas of Wang Yang-ming.<sup>48</sup> Shibata earned Nakano’s admiration because rather

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<sup>45</sup> For Nakano’s childhood “belligerence” (taste for violence) see Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 47 ff. as well as Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], “Nakano Seigō and the Way of the Lion” [獅子の道中野正剛] (Tokyo 1986), p. 254.

<sup>46</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 48.

<sup>47</sup> Shibata Fumishiro [柴田文城] (1868 - 1953), scholar of Chinese classics and Nakano’s teacher.

<sup>48</sup> One of the poems that Nakano left to his sons on the night he committed suicide, he had actually learned from Shibata during one of the frequent school outings. Climbing a mountain, young Nakano had run ahead of the others, turning around every now and then to ask: “How much further are we going to climb?” to which Shibata responded with a Chinese poem by Wang Zhi huan [王之涣] (688-742 A.D.) titled “Climbing the Guan Que pagoda” (鶴雀楼に登る). The poem translates (loosely) “If you want to see farther, climb one store higher.” (欲窮千里目，更上一層樓). Following Nakano’s suicide, his surviving

than trying to suppress so-called bad behavior in students, he aimed to see the good in it and develop it into strength.<sup>49</sup> Nakano – known as a rascal – recalled how one day after class, Shibata asked him to stay and told him:

“Nakano! I hear you are strong and good at fighting. A strong man must not pick on the weak. In light of your strength, I would like to ask a favor of you. Your classmate, such-and-such, is being bullied by his friends and therefore says that he does not want to come to school anymore. I think you would be able to protect him. Can you do it?”<sup>50</sup>

The anecdote is mentioned here not as evidence of Nakano’s moral integrity (although, unable to refuse the request, he did act as bodyguard to that student from then on) but rather because it reflects the values to which Nakano claimed to aspire: He saw strength, including physical strength, as a talent that came with certain responsibilities. Nakano’s early susceptibility to protective impulses is a prototype of his populist pose in later years.

After graduating in 1899 at age 14, Nakano entered the Shūyūkan Middle School [修猷館中学校], the school where Kuroda-han samurai had long been educated and which, then as now, enjoyed the highest prestige and best reputation in Fukuoka prefecture.<sup>51</sup> Tanaka Kōtarō,<sup>52</sup> who attended the school around roughly the same time as Nakano, recalled the institution’s ethos:

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sons took this to mean that they should not give up after the death of their father but continue to struggle through life. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Nakano did not respect all his teachers. Nakano’s *jūdō* instructor in middle school boasted that a master of *jūdō* could not be ambushed and cut down by a swordsman, for he would anticipate the blow and know how to dodge it. Wanting to put the teacher to the test, Nakano ambushed the teacher one night with a bamboo sword and succeeded in hitting him on the head. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 134.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 50.

<sup>51</sup> Retaining its name, the school today the school is called: “Fukuoka Prefecture Shūyūkan High School” [福岡県立修猷館高等学校]. Its graduates include Ogata Taketora [緒方], president of the *Asahi News*; Hirota Kōki [広田弘毅], Prime Minister 1936-7; and Tanaka Kōtarō [田中耕太郎], Minister of Education in the first Yoshida Shigeru cabinet, as well as Yamasaki Hiraku [山崎拓], former president of the LDP.

<sup>52</sup> Tanaka Kōtarō [田中 耕太郎] (1890-1974), legal scholar and high-ranking judge.

“The tendency among the students was clearly to devote themselves to the martial arts. They dreamed about becoming ministers, generals or ambassadors. ... From looking at the famous people the school produced, the academic atmosphere of the Shūyūkan was one that leaned toward the political, bureaucratic and business world. ... Most were interested in practical matters, and there was a great lack of students interested in philosophy, art or religion.”<sup>53</sup>

If this description is appropriate, Nakano was a typical student of that academic tradition.

At the Shūyūkan, however, Nakano got off to a bad start. During *jūdō* practice in his first year he sustained a blow to the leg that re-inflamed a former injury and eventually led to caries in his left thigh bone. Although he took off school for a year, and underwent painful surgery three times at the Kyūshū Imperial University Hospital and once again at home, the injury never quite healed and Nakano continued to suffer discomfort until a final operation in 1926 miscarried and necessitated the amputation of the entire leg. Until then – that is, throughout the formative years of his youth and early adulthood – Nakano was left with an ugly scar and a slight limp.

The injury had far-reaching consequences for Nakano. Besides the physical handicap and the fact that he missed a full year of school, his battered leg also kept him from entering the military, thus precluding the career as a professional soldier that had been his original intent.

Given Nakano’s tender age, the injury could also have dealt his self-confidence a serious blow, but rather than crumbling under the blow he grew through it. While in the hospital, he not only enjoyed what was perhaps his first romantic infatuation (with one of the nurses) but also developed a thirst for knowledge and learning, using his free time to read avidly.<sup>54</sup> In addition, he learned to endure physical pain, undergoing three surgical operations without developing a

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<sup>53</sup> Tanaka Kōtarō quoted in Watanabe, Yukio [渡部行男], “The Enigma of Nakano Seigō’s Suicide” [中野正剛の自決の謎] (Fukuoka, 1996), p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> Though probably platonic, the relationship with the nurse, Noguchi Yukiko [野口雪子], was to last well beyond Nakano’s stay at Kyūshū Imperial Hospital and produced a number of letters which allow a glimpse at Nakano’s private life during those years.

dependence on opiates – the only known painkiller at the time.<sup>55</sup> When Nakano returned to school the following year, he was changed: more determined, more disciplined and more ambitious. He even took up *jūdō* again and continued to practice it with at least as much, if not more, zeal and success.

### Curriculum at Shūyūkan

In 1902, the Shūyūkan counted 29 instructors and 591 students. The school's motto, "Simplicity and Vigor" [質素剛健], was reflected in its demanding curriculum, which aimed to cultivate not only knowledge and physical health but also virtue [知育・徳育・体育]. At the time of Nakano's attendance, the Shūyūkan's five-year curriculum included instruction in ethics, Chinese, Japanese [国語], English, history (Japanese, Asian and Western), geography, mathematics (algebra, arithmetic, geometry, and trigonometry), natural sciences (physics and chemistry), calligraphy, and physical education, which was split between normal sports and military drills. Students attended school for 31 full hours a week; Sundays, public holidays, a six-week summer, and a two-week winter vacation were the only days off. In addition to obligatory classes, from 1895 on the school also offered one hour of voluntary afternoon instruction in either *kendō* or *jūdō*. Students' attrition rate was high; up to a quarter of any given class was forced to repeat the year.<sup>56</sup>

Nakano's ambitions as a student took various forms. Unlike many of his peers, who were content to excel in either the literary or the martial arts, Nakano strove to follow the samurai ideal

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<sup>55</sup> His son Nakano Yasuo writes that after the 3<sup>rd</sup> operation (out of a total of 4 undergone during his teens), Nakano himself reopened the wound with a short sword in order to clean it, creating a complete mess. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 51.

<sup>56</sup> See Haraoka Tetsuji [原岡鐵二] et al., eds., "The Two Hundred Year History of the Shūyūkan" [修猷館二百年史] (Fukuoka, 1985), p. 124 and following as well as p. 522.

of *bunpu-ryōdō* [文武両道] - that is, mastery of both literary and martial arts. According to Nakano's classmate and friend Ogata Taketora,<sup>57</sup>

“Those who chose *jūdō* belonged to the martial faction [*budan-ha* 武断派], while those who chose *kendō* belonged to the civil faction [*bunchi-ha* 文治派]. Nakano was the boss of the *jūdō* circle, yet ... he could also write like no other in the school and was obviously talented. In that sense he was different from all the other members of the *jūdō* faction and more similar to the members of the *kendō* faction.”<sup>58</sup>

Driven by ambition, Nakano was not content with the Shūyūkan's training and sought ways to supplement his education during his free time. In addition to taking the Shūyūkan's classical Chinese courses, Nakano also attended a private school for Chinese studies led by Mune Moritoshi in the afternoons.<sup>59</sup> The intense instruction – which consisted not only of translating and interpreting but also of memorizing and reciting ancient Chinese works – informed Nakano's later writing, which is filled with allusions to and quotations from the classics. According to Nakano, it also shaped his outlook on life, giving it a somewhat “worried” [憂患] tenor.<sup>60</sup>

Nakano's literary talent combined with his diligent study did not fail to catch the attention of both his peers and his teachers. Ogata frequently mentions Nakano's early promise as a writer. Masuda Hiroyuki,<sup>61</sup> instructor of Chinese studies at the Shūyūkan, soon invited Nakano to

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<sup>57</sup> Ogata Taketora [緒方竹虎] (1888-1956), journalist and statesman as well as Nakano's life-long friend and biographer.

<sup>58</sup> The two terms *budan* and *bunchi* refer to two opposing views on how government should be conducted. While the *budan* adherents advocated government through the use of armed force, the *bunchi* faction argued that government should be conducted through just laws and decrees. For lack of a better term I have translated these two terms as “martial” and “civil” faction respectively. The quote is taken from Ogata, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Mune Moritoshi [宗盛年] (1824-1904), scholar and collector of books.

<sup>60</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Little is known of Masuda Hiroyuki [益田祐之] except that he taught at the Shūyūkan and that his father had participated and fallen in the Akitsuki rebellion [秋月の乱] of 1876.

contribute articles to the school's *Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌],<sup>62</sup> a practice that continued well beyond graduation and afforded Nakano some additional income during his university days.<sup>63</sup> The encouragement and praise Nakano received from Masuda sparked Nakano's interest in a journalism career.<sup>64</sup>

In terms of content, Nakano's early writing already contained some of the elements that characterized his later works. Social, political and - to a lesser degree- economic topics were either tackled head on<sup>65</sup> or via character studies of historical personalities.<sup>66</sup> Only rarely did he write of personal experiences; some notable exceptions were a number of reports from Waseda University, in which he described university life to students at the *Shūyūkan*.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The magazine was issued 3 times a year, starting December 1902 and ending with the last edition in January 1922. See Haraoka Tetsuji [原岡鐵二] et al., eds., "The Two Hundred Year History of the *Shūyūkan*" [修猷館二百年史] (Fukuoka, 1985), p. 124 and following.

<sup>63</sup> Altogether, Nakano contributed 13 articles to the *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* over the years.

<sup>64</sup> In 1935, Nakano reminisced how he had first been invited to write for the magazine and how this had built his confidence in his own writing: "When I finished school, I did not want to become a bureaucrat and I did not want to become a merchant either. In order to earn my living, I reckoned that I should pick up writing. The confidence to show myself to the world through my writing I got thanks to the praise of Master Masuda." Nakano Seigō, "Remembering the Alumni Magazine" [学友会雑誌の思い出] quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 51-54.

<sup>65</sup> Examples of the more political essays include "A Dream on a Southern Branch" [南柯の一夢] (June 1904), in which Nakano described how in a dream he had been in China and discussed Asia's position *vis-à-vis* the West with a Chinese student. The essay is one of Nakano's earliest expressions of Pan-Asian thinking, and of his opposition to colonialism and his ambitions on the Asian mainland. Other examples include "Lessons and Opportunities to be gained from the Russo-Japanese War" [征露戦争に於いて偉大なる教訓と好時機] (February 1905), in which Nakano argues that Japan's victory over Russia had proven the superiority of Japan's *bushidō*, a concept he then proceeds to define. A third example is: "On Human Capital" [人材論] (February 1906).

<sup>66</sup> Examples for character studies leading to a discussion of social or political questions include Nakano's first submission to the magazine titled "Lord Kikuchi (Taketoki)" [菊池寂阿公] (1902), "On Education" [修養論] (June 1903), "A Sketch of Saigō" [西郷南州の片影] (December 1903), and "The Rulers of 19<sup>th</sup> Western Century Europe" [西欧一九世紀の支配者] (November 1905).

<sup>67</sup> Examples of these reports kept in a very journalistic style are "From my Waseda Home" [早稲田の里より] (summer 1905), describing student life at Waseda University or a description of his first summer back home from university entitled: "Miscellaneous Notes on my Trip Home" [帰郷雑記] (November 1906). Also in this category belongs the more melancholic "Spit and Rubble" [眩唾瓦礫] (March 1908).



Unsatisfied with the martial arts training offered at the Shūyūkan, Nakano in his fourth year also built and maintained a private *dōjō* [道場], where students could practice in their free time. He himself raised the money necessary to buy the grounds and pay for the hall's construction from Hiraoka Kōtarō, the local coal baron and Genyōsha member. The *dōjō*, called the Shimbu-kan [振武館], was not owned by anyone but was administered and maintained by the students who used it for *jūdō* practice.

Nakano's combination of curricular and extra-curricular activities made for a strict daily schedule. In a piece called "Burning the midnight candle" [灯火を親しむべき], written in 1931, Nakano recalled his student days:

"When I was young, my study was in a shed that my family had cleaned up ... After dinner, I would go to *jūdō* practice. And even though I had decided that as a rule I would come home around 8:30 p.m., in order to read by the candle until late, I often got caught in idle talk after practice and it was after nine, sometimes even ten, before I got back to my study. Feeling remorse that I had not adhered to my original intention, I stayed up until late reading by candle and losing sleep. While reading I thought about myself, my environment and the world, and in thinking that I must become an important man [エライ人にならねばならぬ], I burned the midnight candle. 'Hey, man, are you still doing your silly studies?' my friends would call as they passed by my window after having stayed late at the *jūdō* practice, and having played around on the way home."<sup>68</sup>

It is possible that in retrospect Nakano embellished his memory, making himself more disciplined than he actually was, but his successes both as a writer and *jūdō* practitioner suggest he was a dedicated and determined student of both.

Though we do not have a complete list of the works Nakano read during his youth, some impressed him enough to merit mention. Besides contemporary works such as Tokutomi Sohō's "Silent Thoughts"<sup>69</sup> and a then-popular self-improvement book, Matsumura Kaiseki's "The

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<sup>68</sup> Nakano Seigō in the *Kyūshū Daily* [九州日報], October, 1st 1931, quoted in Inomata, p. 25.

<sup>69</sup> Tokutomi Sohō [徳富蘇峰], "Silent Thoughts" [静思余禄] (Tokyo: Minyūsha [民友社], 1893).

Foundation of Determination,”<sup>70</sup> Nakano focused his reading on the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming (the same Chinese philosopher who influenced the students of Takaba’s Ginseng Field School). Nakano read not only Wang’s “Record of Transmitted Learning” [伝習録], but also books by and about people Wang influenced, namely Satō Issai’s “Genshi shiroku” [言志録]<sup>71</sup> and Ōshio Heihachirō’s “Senshin dōsatsuki” [洗心洞筈記]. Nakano also read everything about Saigō Takamori that he could find. Once the ideas of Wang Yang-ming entered Nakano’s mind through these works, they found fertile ground on which to grow.

### **Social Life**

Nakano’s busy schedule left little time for socializing and cultivating friendships, but this may just have suited Nakano’s approach to social relations. One of his fellow students at the Shūyūkan, Umezawa Shinroku [梅沢慎六], later recalled that

“as a student, Nakano certainly cultivated an air of proud aloofness. He would not socialize with just anyone, but only with a restricted number of students. Probably, he felt there was no point in socializing with worthless fellows [くだらない連中]. It is not as if he did not cherish friendship. In fact, he even went out of his way for his friends, doing this and that. However, he was very clear about whom he liked and whom he disliked.”<sup>72</sup>

As far as we know, Nakano had only two close friends: first, Ogata Taketora, who became Nakano’s best friend and life-long companion and who wrote Nakano’s most intimate biography. Originally intent on a career in commerce (Ogata often joked that he would support Nakano’s

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<sup>70</sup> Matsumura Kaisei [松村介石] “Foundation of Determination” [立志之礎] (Tokyo, 1889) was but one of many self-improvement books published at the time and is said to have left a lasting impression on Nakano. See Inomata, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup> Satō Issai (1772 - 1859) was a Confucian scholar of the later Tokugawa period, whose teachings were influenced by Chu-tzū and Wang Yang-ming.

<sup>72</sup> Umezawa Shinroku quoted in Inomata, p. 94.

political career with the fortunes he earned in the China trade<sup>73</sup>), Ogata first enrolled at the Tokyo Higher Commercial School, the precursor of today's Hitotsubashi University. Nakano, however, persuaded him to switch to Waseda University and after graduating to take a job with the *Asahi News*. Though Nakano always hoped that Ogata would follow him not only into journalism but also into politics, it was not to happen during Nakano's lifetime. Ogata stayed with the *Asahi News*, eventually rising to become the paper's president and it was only after the end of WW2 that he entered politics.

Nakano's second friend was Yasukawa Daigorō, who later founded Yasukawa Electric Corporation and pioneered the use of nuclear power in Japan.<sup>74</sup> The friendship between Nakano and Yasukawa was never as close as Nakano's relationship with Ogata, but the camaraderie lasted until Nakano's death and Yasukawa supported Nakano's political career financially from start to finish.

Within the school's social landscape, all three men were considered hardliners who studied and followed their *jūdō* practice diligently. They despised so-called soft-liners - dandyish students who wore perfume and talked to girls.<sup>75</sup> In 1903, Nakano organized the school's hardliners into a society, of which he became the first president. Known as the Gennan-sha [玄南社], the society's aim was to practice "speechmaking, writing and training the member's heroic spirits" (it is not clear what was meant by the latter).<sup>76</sup> Besides Nakano's friends Ogata and Yasukawa, the society included many of those who practiced *jūdō* at the Shimbu-kan. After Nakano left Fukuoka to study at Waseda, the society's presidency passed into the hands of Yasukawa, although Nakano

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<sup>73</sup> See Ogata, p. 34.

<sup>74</sup> Yasukawa Daigorō [安川第五郎] (1886 - 1976), business man and life-long financial backer of Nakano's.

<sup>75</sup> The Japanese term is *kōha* [硬派] lit. 'hard wave' as opposed to *nanpa* [軟派], meaning 'soft wave'.

<sup>76</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 57.

remained in touch with members. The society over time became more militant, to the point where members actually beat up soft-liners. It is not clear whether this happened with Nakano's knowledge, consent or approval.

The fact that there was little time for friendships or socializing free of ulterior purpose does not mean there was no time for rivalry. One of Nakano's rivals, Miyagawa Ikkan,<sup>77</sup> the son of Miyagawa Ta'ichirō, featured in Nakano's life repeatedly, beating him at *jūdō* during the Shūyūkan graduation tournament, later following him to Waseda, and eventually running for election in the same electoral district as Nakano - this time losing against his longtime rival.

### **Graduation and University**

Thanks to his talents and efforts, Nakano was one of the better students – graduating 3rd in his class of fifty-seven.<sup>78</sup> He was particularly good at Chinese and essay composition, and reasonably good in English. The only subject that seems to have caused him difficulties was mathematics, so much so that even many years later he claimed to be haunted by nightmares involving trigonometry exams. Inomata has shown, however, that even if Nakano had difficulties with the subject, his math grades were no worse than those in other subjects,<sup>79</sup> suggesting that Nakano's dislike for the subject was due less to lack of ability than to a deliberate choice to neglect a discipline that had always been looked down on by samurais as the skill of greedy and penny-pinching merchants.

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<sup>77</sup> Miyagawa Ikkan [宮川一貫] (1884 - 1944), Fukuoka politician and business man. For more information see Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], Nakano Seigō and the Way of the Lion [獅子の道中野正剛] (Tokyo, 1986), p. 269.

<sup>78</sup> In his first, second, third, fourth, and fifth year at the Shūyūkan, Nakano had been respectively 6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> from the top. See Inomata, p. 28.

<sup>79</sup> According to Nakano's score card, Nakano had 80/100 points in geometry, 82/100 points in trigonometry, 85/100 points in history, and 83/100 points in classics (i.e. classical Chinese studies). See Inomata p. 28.

As graduation from middle school drew nearer, it became time to decide what to do next. Nakano's original plan had been to enter the military academy, but his leg injury precluded this venue and thus he decided to go to university.

### **Waseda or Tōdai**

Nakano's talents, aptitude and grades would have enabled him to enter even the most prestigious of Japan's public universities: Tokyo Imperial University, preferably its faculty of law, which then as today was Japan's safest springboard toward a career in government. Nakano's choice not to follow this path but instead to enter the less prestigious Waseda University does not seem to have met any opposition from his parents, teachers or mentors, but it must have caused puzzlement and surprise; most of his biographers felt the need to explain it. Ogata writes:

“In middle school Nakano was always 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> from the top, and even though he graduated as one of the brains of his class, he refused to aim at entering one of the public universities. Instead he already then had chosen to enter Waseda. At the time, it was still believed that a private university would only attract students whose grades were either too poor to enter a public university or who had failed the entrance exam. Therefore his decision to go to Waseda in spite of his excellent grades was viewed by many with suspicion and as the act of a rebellious child.”<sup>80</sup>

Various explanations have been put forward to account for Nakano's unorthodox choice. Fear of failing the entrance exam – especially the mathematics section – may have been one factor. Nakano entered Waseda without taking that university's entrance exam, opting instead to take the one-year preparatory course [高等予科] before proceeding to the 3-year university course proper. However, even if he disliked mathematics, he was still good at it and it is unlikely that fear of exam alone would have stopped him from applying to Tokyo Imperial University.

More important was the fact that following the well-trodden path from middle school into

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<sup>80</sup> Ogata, p. 24.

one of the Imperial Universities and from there into one of Japan's bureaucracies did not appeal to Nakano's taste. According to Ogata, Nakano's later dislike for bureaucrats found an early expression in his disdain for the students of the imperial universities, whom he considered "unhatched eggs of bureaucrats" and "exponents of careerism" [出世主義].<sup>81</sup> Nakano was definitely more drawn toward a different career path, one modeled on the lives of the veterans of constitutional politics such as Inukai Tsuyoshi, Ozaki Yukio, and many others who had entered politics via a private university and a career in journalism.

Financial concerns were a final and decisive factor – one mentioned by Nakano himself. The course at Tokyo Imperial University lasted six years, as opposed to only four at Waseda, meaning Nakano would enter the work force earlier and not forego two years of income. When writing about his experiences at Waseda in a *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* article, Nakano made clear that these considerations had played a role in his mind: "To those who can neither afford high tuition fees nor waste much time, I recommend entering Waseda."<sup>82</sup>

Nakano was aware that, in the public eye, education at Waseda was considered inferior and that by implication he too might be considered inferior. In an essay entitled "From My Waseda Home" addressing *Shūyūkan* students, he dealt with the issue directly, first quoting a student from an imperial university:

"What are the students of Waseda so boastful about? It is known to be a university without [entrance] exams. Waseda is really a gathering point for trash [屑]. It is a meeting point for weak students who cannot surmount the difficult hurdle posed by the selective entrance exams."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ogata, p. 25.

<sup>82</sup> Nakano Seigō, "From my Waseda Home" [早稲田の里より] *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], summer 1905.

<sup>83</sup> Both quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, "From my Waseda Home" [早稲田の里より] *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], summer 1905.

Nakano conceded that at private universities, one could indeed observe many students who were “complete trash,” but rejoined that one could also find “genius.” He advised younger Shūyūkan students who considered following his example that “... in order to match the students of the Imperial University, you simply have to make more effort. If [you do] so, you should be able to compare with them.” Nakano concluded: “If I were to point out the shortcomings of the Waseda students [I would say that] at Waseda they grow an early-ripening kind of rice. Accordingly, the yield is small.”<sup>84</sup>

Nakano, unsurprisingly, counted himself among those in this small yield. At least in the early years at Waseda, he heeded his own advice about making more effort to compare with the imperial universities’ students. Ogata, who came to Tokyo a year after Nakano and who from the fall of 1906 shared a room and desk with him, later recalled that Nakano

“at Waseda would compete with students from the imperial universities eagerly, trying not to lose a single contest. For that reason he studied very hard. ... In middle school I had known him as a talented student who did not have to study much. When I came to Tokyo, I lived with him for the first time ... and was surprised to find out how hard he studied.”<sup>85</sup>

Whatever others may have thought about Waseda University and Nakano’s decision to enroll there, his self-confidence suggests he himself was content with his choice. In his essay “From My Home in Waseda,” Nakano addressed a perennial student worry - namely how well studies prepare students for their future lives. After noting that “law students do not have a market, students of literature find it hard to find a teaching position in the countryside, graduates

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<sup>84</sup> Nakano made a play on words for ‘Waseda’ [早稲田] literally means ‘field used for growing early rice’. See Nakano Seigō, “From my Waseda Home” [早稲田の里より] *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], summer 1905.

<sup>85</sup> Ogata, p. 25.

from engineering and commercial schools have the easiest time to find employment, but for how long is anybody's guess," Nakano asked: "What kind of person has the right stuff to enter student life given all these worries?" He answered himself: "A youth with a certain something in their heart [胸中サムシングを有する青年]. ... I have chosen this path to study because I do have [that certain] something and I do not pay heed to the mistaken talk of my vulgar seniors, nor to whether or not I will be marketable in the future."<sup>86</sup> A rare reported instance where Nakano's Waseda credentials were put into question was when he asked for his future wife's hand and her mother wondered whether a Waseda man would be good enough for her daughter.

### **Financial Matters**

The typical trials of university life were not the only difficulties Nakano had to confront as a student. Problems of a completely different and worldlier nature soon pushed themselves into the center of Nakano's focus.

Amid the economic depression following the Russo-Japanese War, his parents' business in Fukuoka started to deteriorate. During his first summer vacation, Nakano went to Fukuoka to help his family put the business in order and move into a smaller house. When he returned to Tokyo in the fall to resume his studies, the financial support he received from home decreased each month. In retrospect, Nakano's decision to attend Waseda – the cheaper option compared to the imperial universities – seemed increasingly appropriate. Then, during Nakano's second year at Waseda (1906-7), his parents' business failed altogether after a relative failed to repay a loan. The already meager trickle of money that Nakano received from his parents dried up completely.

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<sup>86</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, "The Student's Worries of the Road ahead" [学生前途の恐慌] which is a subsection of "From my Waseda Home" [早稲田の里より], *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], summer 1905, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 68.



Nakano dealt with this financial problem in several ways. He tried to keep expenses down, for one, embracing frugality and disdaining fancy clothing and money-consuming social activities. Those who recall Nakano during his university days seldom fail to mention that he was one of the few students to wear tattered *kokura* cotton clothes instead of more expensive wool or western clothing, even in winter.<sup>87</sup>

Sometimes, Nakano's cost-cutting took more extreme forms. When he moved into a Chinese-student dorm called Hōrai Shinsho [蓬萊深处], he told the landlords on his first day that eventually he was "going to become the most important man of Japan," and as such they should be happy to let him live at their place. Luckily for Nakano, the owners of the dorm were friendly and swayed by his arrogance.<sup>88</sup> He paid rent once but never thereafter.

Nakano also sought new sources of income and was, as Ogata recalls, "good at making money."<sup>89</sup> Nakano took lecture notes for wealthy Chinese exchange students, continued writing articles for the *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* and also started contributing articles regularly to Miyake Setsurei's<sup>90</sup> *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人]. This last job alone earned him a

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<sup>87</sup> Kazami Akira, a class mate of Nakano's at Waseda, recalled that Nakano "almost never wore new shoes. He would buy used shoes for 50 *sen*, wear them until they could no longer be worn and then sell them for 30 *sen*, then add another twenty *sen* from his money and buy another used pair. This he would repeat over and over." Kazami Akira quoted in Mitamura, [三田村武夫]; "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?" [中野正剛は何故自刀したか] (Tokyo, 1953), p. 124-25.

<sup>88</sup> The son of the dormitory's landlord later recalled: "Nakano arrived at our place with one piece of luggage and immediately demanded: 'Let me stay at your place!' At that time, it was almost impossible to get students to pay their rent and so my mother asked him: 'Do you have a guarantor?' to which Nakano replied: 'I don't need a guarantor. I am going to become the most important man of Japan [日本一偉い人間]. How could you not offer me a place?' and with this arrogant snort he moved in. This made us think that he might be an interesting person and in the end we decided to let him stay. He paid the full rent only for the first month, but never again after that. And it did not stop there - he demanded that we give him beef and Sashimi to eat and would invite one friend after another. ... He certainly was a pleasant character who did not attach too much importance to worldly things..." Quoted in Mitamura, Takeo [三田村武夫]; "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?" [中野正剛は何故自刀したか] (Tokyo, 1953), p. 127.

<sup>89</sup> Ogata, p. 38.

<sup>90</sup> Miyake Setsurei [三宅雪嶺] (1860-1945), journalist, philosopher and historian.

monthly income of 30 Yen.<sup>91</sup> When in spite of these efforts he still did not have enough money, Nakano would repeatedly “borrow” from Tōyama Mitsuru.<sup>92</sup>

Rather than crumbling under the weight of studying and making a living simultaneously, Nakano seems to have been emboldened by the experience. In the winter of 1908, he moved his entire family to Tokyo so that he could take care of them. In a letter to his sweetheart - Noguchi Yukiko, his former nurse at Kyūshū University Hospital - Nakano described this decision in dramatic terms:

“From now on, I am responsible for the rise and fall of my family, and I believe that my first loyalty will be to making a living. ... Parents and siblings are a gift of heaven and one should not avoid looking after them. ... Rather than trying to fit my parents into a narrow house, we have rented a somewhat larger one and it will be up to me to earn the rent with my bare hands [小生の腕一本] - that is, by writing articles or borrowing money. ... I believe that ... unless you are stupid or handicapped you will not starve.”<sup>93</sup>

For all its bluster, Nakano’s prediction is not far from the truth. Rather than simply accepting the ever-smaller sums his parents sent to pay for his studies, Nakano reversed the flow and paid not only for his own tuition and housing but also for his brother, who arrived in Tokyo in March 1909, and the rest of his family, which – with the exception of his oldest sister, Mura who was already married in Fukuoka – followed by mid-year. The Nakanos moved into a house large enough to accommodate the whole family as well as a Chinese boarding student. The boarding fee was so large that it enabled Nakano not only to pay rent for the house but also wages for a

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<sup>91</sup> Thirty Yen a month was a very generous pay for what must have been a part-time position, especially if we consider that the starting salary for a university graduate was 30 Yen and a police officer earned a mere 12 Yen per month. See Iwasaki Jirō [岩崎爾郎], “Price Conditions over 100 Years” [物価の世相 100年] (Tokyo, 1982), p. 286-300.

<sup>92</sup> We know that Nakano repeatedly borrowed money from Tōyama, but not how much, under what conditions, whether the loans were ever repaid at least in part, or what sort of strings Tōyama attached to granting the loans. At the very least, these loans must have created an emotional obligation on the side of Nakano.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Nakano Seigō to Yukiko Noguchi quoted in Inomata, p. 40-41.

maid – in fact, it leaves one wondering whether Nakano might not have overcharged the boarder.<sup>94</sup> Incidentally, long after he graduated from university and became a well-to-do journalist and politician, Nakano continued sharing his house with his parents and some boarding students, suggesting that while money may have been the initial motivation for the living arrangement, genuine interest in education and the desire to provide a home for family and acquaintances became equally important.

Nakano's dual life as student and wage-earner limited his free time but did not keep him from the extracurricular activities he prized. In university and throughout his life, Nakano took no interest in team sports such as baseball. When Waseda played against the Keiō University, he preferred studying in the library to supporting the team. He continued practicing *jūdō*, however, advancing to 1st degree black belt (*shodan*) in 1906 and 2nd degree black belt (*nidan*) in 1911. He also won titles at various tournaments. Whether Nakano began practicing speechmaking - his forte in later years - as a student and whether he joined the university's debating society is a matter of controversy. According to his classmate Kazami Akira,<sup>95</sup> who followed Nakano into journalism and politics, Nakano, Ogata and Kazami became friends through Waseda's debating society. According to others, Nakano as a student dismissed speechmaking as a futile exercise, saying: "Do you hope to actually gain power over the realm through speeches? Look at Inukai! Look at Ozaki!"<sup>96</sup>

### **Intellectual Influences at Waseda**

Two of Nakano's many professors seem to have influenced his thinking in particular.

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<sup>94</sup> This boarding student obviously paid a very generous fee to the family and that was not all. Hashimoto Tetsuba [橋本徹馬], a friend of Nakano's, served as rickshaw driver for the same student - earning enough money with that job to pay his way through university.

<sup>95</sup> Kazami Akira [風見章] (1886– 1961), journalist and politician.

<sup>96</sup> Umezawa Shinroku [梅沢慎六] quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 462.

Shiozawa Masasada,<sup>97</sup> who taught economics, introduced Nakano to English liberal and utilitarian economic thought. Shiozawa's influence is reflected in one of Nakano's essays entitled "The Joy of Progressing in One's Activity,"<sup>98</sup> in which Nakano made the utilitarian argument that the pursuit of progress in one's own endeavors was the only happiness one could hope for in this world and the best way to contribute to the welfare of society as a whole. While Nakano's grasp of economic thought as reflected in this essay may still have been weak and his knowledge shallow, Shiozawa's foundation informed Nakano's liberal thinking for years afterward. Even during the 1930s, when Nakano advocated active state intervention in economic affairs, his liberal roots remained visible. Nakano stayed in contact with Shiozawa after university, as Shiozawa frequently contributed articles to magazines Nakano edited.

The political philosophy Nakano studied under the guidance of Waseda professor Ukita Kazutami<sup>99</sup> was similarly influential. Baptized Christian and raised by Western teachers, Ukita taught at his *alma mater*, Dōshisha, before studying for two years at Yale and then taking a position at Waseda. A strong advocate of liberal democracy, parliamentary party politics, universal suffrage, and gender equality, Ukita taught political science and European history, specializing in the age of Napoleon. Ukita introduced Nakano to republican ideas of political philosophy, including people's rights. At this stage, however, young Nakano was more impressed with Napoleon's heroic career and military achievements than with political philosophy.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Shiozawa Masasada [塩沢昌貞 or 昌禎] (1870 – 1945) economist and advisor to Ōkuma Shigenobu.

<sup>98</sup> Nakano Seigō "The Joy of Progressing in one's Activities" [活動進取の快] in *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌] February 1907.

<sup>99</sup> Ukita Kazutami [浮田 和民] (1860 - 1946), Christian, political scientist and pioneer of democratic thought in Japan.

<sup>100</sup> Ukita's influence on Nakano is evident in one of his essays published in the *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* under the title "The Ruler of 19<sup>th</sup> Western Century Europe", who, according to Nakano, was none other than Napoleon. Starting from the premise that 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe lacked truly great figures such as Jesus, Socrates, Buddha, or Confucius, who managed to influence the way people think for eternity, Nakano stated that short of a truly great man, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was "honored to have Napoleon as a

### Intellectual Influences outside University

Exposure to Western liberal economics and political science were crucial to Nakano's later thinking, but an account of his student days that fails to mention influences outside the lecture halls would be incomplete.

Through his contributions to the magazine *Japan and the Japanese*, Nakano came into contact with its editor, the journalist, philosopher and historian Miyake Setsurei. Born in Kanazawa-city of Kaga-han (present-day Ishikawa prefecture), Miyake graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Tokyo University in 1883 and initially worked for the Ministry of Education. He later married the novelist and poet Tanabe Kaho. Together with Shiga Shigetaka,<sup>101</sup> Inoue Enryō [井上円了] and Sugiura Jūgō,<sup>102</sup> Miyake founded the Seikyōsha (政教社, lit. Society for Political Education) in 1888. The group opposed the government's drive toward Westernization and advocated a pure nationalism [国粹主義], seeking to educate the Japanese public about - and thus preserve the uniqueness of - Japanese culture and identity. In 1907, the society's organ, *The Japanese* [日本人], took over the failing newspaper *Japan* [日本]. The resulting publication was renamed *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人] and Miyake became its chief editor. It must have been around that time that Nakano, still a student, started writing for the magazine.

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substitute.” The difference between Napoleon and mere conquerors such as Attila the Hun was that Napoleon was not only a great military leader and destroyer of the old but also an able legislator and state builder. Hence it is thanks to Napoleon that the revolutionary republican idea could spread in the world like a fire. See Nakano Seigō, “The rulers of 19<sup>th</sup> Western Century Europe”[西欧一九世紀の支配者] in *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌] November 1905.

<sup>101</sup> Shiga Shigetaka [志賀重昂] (1863 - 1927), intellectual, geographer and politician.

<sup>102</sup> Sugiura Jūgō [杉浦重剛] (1855 - 1924), educator and politician.

The relationship between the two men became close. Over the years, Nakano took on an increasingly important role in the running of the magazine - which was renamed *Our View* [我觀] in 1923 and *Eastern Continent* [東大陸] in 1936, when it began serving as the organ of Nakano's proto-fascist party. Nakano also married Miyake's daughter in 1912, thus adding familial to professional ties.<sup>103</sup>

Tetsuo Najita notes that Nakano's writings at Waseda “most certainly reflect an early acceptance of the major assumptions of Miyake ... Like Miyake, he attacked the ‘Europe-centric’ view of the modern world and defended Japan's unique historical development within the Asian cultural community.” This is probably true, but Najita exaggerates Miyake’s influence when casting Nakano, like Miyake, as one of the “principal spokesmen on the political scene of a ‘popular nationalism’ or ‘national peopleism’ ... according to which a distinctive spiritual national legacy was crucial in providing a nation with coherence and inner strength.”<sup>104</sup> While both Miyake and Nakano would have described Japan's mission in Asia - especially its role in overcoming Western imperialism in Asia - in terms that echoed one another, Nakano would do so without relying on Japan's spiritual, cultural or aesthetic uniqueness.<sup>105</sup> Unlike Miyake, who opposed the wholesale introduction of Western culture into Japan, Nakano eventually took a more open-minded universalistic – or, at least, progressive internationalist - stance, which enabled him to adopt and incorporate Western ideas (such as fascism) much more easily into his thinking than

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<sup>103</sup> Strangely, in his autobiography, Miyake Setsurei does not write about Nakano in any detail. Their professional ties are not mentioned at all and their familial ties are mentioned only in passing. See Miyake Setsurei “Autobiography: Talking about Myself” [自伝 / 自分を語る] (Tokyo, 1997), p. 74-5.

<sup>104</sup> All quotations taken from Najita, Tetsuo “Nakano Seigō and the Spirit of the Meiji Restoration in Twentieth-Century Japan” in *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*; ed. James Morely, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) p. 377-79.

<sup>105</sup> When Miyake and Nakano’s son revived Nakano’s magazine after Nakano's death in 1944, they did so under the motto “True, Good and Beautiful” [真善美], and rightly so, for these themes were central to Miyake's thought and his concept of Japanese identity. By comparison, Nakano’s thinking was more about practical themes such as power and justice and much less concerned defining the particularities of the Japanese identity through philosophical abstractions such as truth, goodness or beauty.

Miyake would have liked. It also opened him to the attacks from the pure nationalist camp for being a “mongrel between Japan and the West.”<sup>106</sup>

Less a mentor than either Tōyama or Miyake and more a guiding role model for Nakano was Inukai Tsuyoshi<sup>107</sup>, whose acquaintance Nakano also made during his student years.<sup>108</sup> Inukai, also known by his pen name Bokudō [木堂], had been born in Bitchū domain (present-day Okayama prefecture) and later studied at Keiō University. After working as a journalist for several newspapers, Inukai entered politics in 1882, serving as a member of parliament for a total of 41 years. It is not clear when Nakano first met Inukai, nor by whom they were introduced, but the first mention of Inukai's presence in Nakano's life is around 1908-9, when Inukai introduced Nakano to the Chinese student whom the Nakano family later took on as a boarder. Over the next two decades, Nakano came to admire Inukai greatly and made the latter's career a blueprint for his own. Writing for the *Asahi News*, Nakano supported Inukai's political activities, such as his role during the the first movement to protect the constitution - a role that earned Inukai and Ozaki Yukio the nicknames “gods of the constitution.” In the early 1920s, after winning election to the Lower House himself, Nakano drew even closer to Inukai, joining the Reform Club [革新倶楽部] under Inukai's leadership. Their relationship foundered in 1924, when Inukai - recognizing the limitations of being a member of a minor party - joined the Rikken Seiyūkai and Nakano joined the opposing Kenseikai. Though they subsequently found themselves in different political camps and their relationship chilled, it never turned openly hostile. Inukai became the sixth president of the Seiyūkai in 1929, and, following the fall of the Wakatsuki cabinet in 1931, the 29th Prime Minister of Japan.

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<sup>106</sup> Aochi Shin [青地晨], “Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛] in *Chisei* [知性], February 1955, p. 153.

<sup>107</sup> Inukai Tsuyoshi [犬養 毅] (1855 – 1932), journalist, politician and Prime Minister.

<sup>108</sup> See Ogata, p. 22.

A third important extra-curricular influence on Nakano's intellectual life was his encounters with Chinese expatriates living in Tokyo. In the first decade of the 20th century, Tokyo was home to a lively Chinese community of intellectuals, students and political exiles, many of whom had come to Japan to study how their Asian neighbor had succeeded in modernizing and dealing with the Western imperialist threat. They hoped, upon their return to China, to apply this knowledge in the service of China's own development.<sup>109</sup>

One of Nakano's ports of entry into the Chinese community was Chinese students at Waseda. The university accepted Chinese students starting around the turn of the century, and by the time Nakano arrived there were about 2 or 3 in every class. To earn money, Nakano offered to take lecture notes for some of them; in some cases, the practice led to long-lasting friendships.<sup>110</sup> Noteworthy were the Lin brothers from Fujian. Lin Chang-min<sup>111</sup> was a classmate of Nakano's who later occupied various positions within the Chinese republican government. He also introduced Nakano to his younger brother Lin Yin-min, whom Nakano taught Japanese and who died in the 1911 Chinese revolution.<sup>112</sup> An even closer friendship grew between Nakano and his

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<sup>109</sup> Marius Jansen gives a comprehensive account of the Chinese community in Tokyo during that time. See Marius Jansen, "Japan and Sun Yat-sen" (Stanford, 1970).

<sup>110</sup> When Nakano wrote about his relationship to with Chinese students in the *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine*, he did not mention the financial dimension. While stating that many of them had come to Japan to acquire modern Western knowledge at prices lower than those it would have cost in either the US or Europe, he described his role as that of a teacher. See Nakano Seigō: "Chinese Exchange Students in Japan" [日本留学支那学生], which is a subsection of "From my Waseda Home" [早稲田の里より] *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], summer 1905, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 68.

<sup>111</sup> Lin Chang-min [林長民] (1876-1925) politician of late imperial and early Republican China.

<sup>112</sup> The little we know about the younger of the two brother, Lin Yin-min [林尹民], we know from Nakano who in an article entitled "Remembering my passed-away Friend Lin Yin-min" [憶亡友林君民] recalled with much pathos how he met Lin Yin-min while still a student at Waseda, how the latter had studied Japanese under Nakano and eventually entered Seijō Gakkō [成城学校]. The younger Lin had returned to China in 1910 to cure typhus. Once there, he joined the fighting and was one of the youngest members of the revolutionary army when he fell in 1911. Extracts from the article originally published on December 14, 1911 in the *Asahi News* can be found in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 111.



Chinese classmate Ting Chien-hsiu<sup>113</sup> from Manchuria, who when serving years later as Minister of Transport of the Japanese puppet state in Manshūkoku, said: “I was not much of a scholar. If I graduated, it was only thanks to Nakano’s help.”<sup>114</sup> It was with Ting Chien-hsiu that Nakano made his first trip to China and Manchuria during the summer of 1908. In Dalian he met pan-Asianist thinker and activist Kaneko Sessai, whom Nakano came to greatly admire and respect.

A native of Fukui province, Kaneko had worked as a journalist, then moved to Taiwan and later to the Asian mainland before settling in Dalian, where he ran the “Rescue-the-East School” [振東学社] and published the *Far Eastern Daily* [泰東日報], both aimed at furthering Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>115</sup> Through his work, Kaneko had earned the respect of both Japanese Pan-Asian activists such as Inukai and Tōyama as well as the Chinese community in Dalian.<sup>116</sup>

Kaneko came to play a special role in Nakano’s life in that he was one of the few people from whom Nakano would take criticism - and perhaps the only one whom he would pay respect for criticism received.<sup>117</sup> Often, when Nakano got carried away by his emotions and lofty dreams, it was Kaneko who would let the air out of his inflated ego and clip his wings. Their first encounter during that summer set the tone: Although still students, Nakano and Ting were staying at an expensive hotel (the room being paid for by a Waseda graduate they had happened to meet

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<sup>113</sup> Ting Chien-hsiu (Ding Jian Xiu) [丁鑑修] (1886 – 1944), politician and educator.

<sup>114</sup> Ting quoted in Komai Tokuzō [駒井徳三]; “A look behind the scenes of political fund raising” [政治資金の楽屋裏]; part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 20.

<sup>115</sup> Most of what we know about Kaneko Sessai [金子雪斎] we know through Nakano. See Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く] (Tokyo: May, 1938), p. 294-96.

<sup>116</sup> Kazami Akira went as far as saying: “I don’t think there is any other Japanese national who earned so much respect among the Chinese.” Kazami quoted in Inomata p. 33. For a positive sketch of Kaneko see also Kojima Kazuo [古島一雄], “Memories of an Old Politician” [一老政治家の回想] (Tokyo, 1951), p. 131.

<sup>117</sup> Ogata Taketora adds that Kaneko was unique among Nakano’s mentors in that Nakano remained loyal to him until the end of his life. See Ogata, p. 30.

by chance). When Kaneko learned about this, he kicked them out of his house for engaging in frivolous extravagance. Similarly, when in later years, Nakano objected to granting independence to Korea, it was Kaneko who told him: “There is no way that one man can tell another human being that he cannot be independent.”<sup>118</sup> And when in 1921-2 Nakano’s friends wanted to collect funds for Nakano – then already a member of the Lower House – because his magazine was running at a loss, it was again Kaneko who reminded them: “Since the inception of the Imperial Diet, we have not had one case of an MP starving to death. If Nakano were to be the first, we should welcome this, for it would show that he was willing to die for politics.” (No fundraising took place that evening.) This sort of moral strictness earned Kaneko Nakano’s life-long respect. Nakano later wrote: “From my youth onward I have had the bad habit of not taking people seriously, but in front of master Kaneko I have always lowered my head.”<sup>119</sup> When in later years Nakano opened his own private academy he named it “Rescue-the-East Academy” [振東塾] in memory of Kaneko’s school.

Once his interest in China had been sparked, Nakano actively sought ways to deepen his understanding of Chinese affairs and multiply his contacts with Chinese people. Having shared a house with a couple of friends from Fukuoka in his first year at Waseda, he decided to move into the Horai Shinsho, a dorm for Chinese students where “no Japanese was spoken.” There Nakano could practice Chinese and “eat pork legs, meat dumpling and oily food [i.e., stereotypical Chinese dishes].”<sup>120</sup> He lived there until mid-1909, when he left to live with his family. Even then, he maintained a Chinese element in his living arrangement by offering lodging to a Chinese

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<sup>118</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea” [満鮮の鏡に映して] (Tokyo: Tōhōjiron-sha, 1921), p. 145.

<sup>119</sup> For the quote and a description of their first meeting and the quote see Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く] (Tokyo, May, 1938), p. 295-96.

<sup>120</sup> Nakano in a letter to Yukiko Noguchi quoted in Inomata, p. 28.

exchange student. Shin Tê-kuang,<sup>121</sup> son of the Chinese politician Shin Ch'un-ken,<sup>122</sup> had previously stayed with the Konoe family and was introduced to Nakano by Inukai Tsuyoshi and Nakano's classmate Lin Chang-min. Within the Nakano family, Tê-kuang was soon called "Tokuhito" or simply "Shin-chan," and accepted as an additional sibling.

### **Contact with Chinese Revolutionaries**

Nakano's contacts to the Chinese community living in Japan were not limited to students. He also established contacts with Chinese political activists in Tokyo, many of whom were living in exile and subsequently played prominent roles in the Chinese revolution of 1911. Whether the initiative in seeking these contacts came from Nakano or whether, as in the case of his Chinese boarding student, it came from Tōyama and Inukai, is unclear, but in either case these two mentors likely lent a helping hand. The place where Nakano first met these young Chinese activists was the office of the Mimpō-sha (Min Bao She) [民報社] near his home. Officially, the rooms housed the editorial bureau of Mimpō (Min Bao), the organ of the Chinese League [中国同盟会]. Simultaneously, they also served as meeting place of Chinese exiles, including such important figures as Sun-Yat-sen, Huang Xing and Song Jiaoren.<sup>123</sup>

The harmonious relations between the Japanese Pan-Asian activists and their Chinese counterparts that Nakano experienced at the offices of the Mimpō-sha were important to him in

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<sup>121</sup> Shin Tê-kuang (Cen De Guang) [岑德広] (1897 - 1945?) later served in Japan's puppet regime in China.

<sup>122</sup> Shin Ch'un-ken (Cen chun Xuan) [岑春煊] had served as governor Sichuan province in China before coming to Tokyo. See Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], "Nakano Seigō and the Way of the Lion" [獅子の道中野正剛] (Tokyo 1986), p. 277.

<sup>123</sup> Sun Yat-sen [孫文 or 孫逸仙] (1866-1925). Leading figure of the Chinese republican revolution and first provisional president of the Chinese republic. Known as the father of modern China. Huang Xing (Huang Hsing) [黃興] (1874-1916) Chinese revolutionary leader. Song Jiaoren (Song Jiao Ren) [宋教仁] (1882-1913) Chinese republican revolutionary, leader and founder of the Kuomintang.

more than one way. Nakano was stimulated by the “spiritual electricity flowing between the youth of modern Japan and the revolutionary pioneers of China,” by the possibility of “mingling with the future heroes of the Chinese revolution” and by talking to them from “the bottom of our hearts.”<sup>124</sup> Although the list of Chinese revolutionaries whom Nakano met and befriended during this time is rather short (it includes the magazine’s chief editor Zhang Bing-lin,<sup>125</sup> as well as Huang Xing<sup>126</sup>), these encounters were just the beginning. In later years, Nakano cultivated and expanded his relations with Chinese leaders, eventually coming into contact with “higher-ups” of China’s political world such as Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, etc. This, combined with his frequent trips to China, helped him develop into something of a China expert.

There is, however, more to it, for in retrospect, these encounters with Chinese revolutionaries during his university years were defining. When writing or talking about Sino-Japanese relations (or relations between Japan and other Asian nations, for that matter), Nakano would invariably invoke the memory of this brief moment of harmony between the two countries, when they had cooperated in the struggle against colonialism. The following reminiscence is one of many examples:

“At the time, there were [some] among Japan’s politicians ... who gave great support to the Chinese revolutionaries, with the results that the youth of the two countries were filled with Asian thinking and the relations between the two nations were for a couple of years friendly.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, “The Revival of Stagnant Japan” [沈滞日本の更生] (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1931), p. 88-89.

<sup>125</sup> Zhang Bing-lin (Zhang Bing-lin) [章炳麟] (1869-1936), thinker and politician of the late imperial and early republican China. About his meeting with Zhang, Nakano would write in 1932: “...the person who led the Mimpō magazine, rousing the hearts of an entire generation of Chinese, is China’s foremost scholar of Confucianism, the Kant of the Far East, who was introduced to me as ‘Master Chang Ping-lin’.” Nakano Seigō, “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction” [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo, October 1933), p.120-23.

<sup>126</sup> Nakano described his encounter with Huang in a piece published in 1911 and quoted in Inomata, p. 31.

<sup>127</sup> Nakano Seigō, in appendix entitled “The Direction of our Global Policy” [我世界政策の指針] found in “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction” [国家改造計画綱領] (Tokyo, October 1933), p. 120-23.

This, according to Nakano, was not only how things had been in the years after 1905 but also how Sino-Japanese relations should be in future. Nakano's experience became an ideal and in this sense was not only a starting point but also a point to which he repeatedly tried to return in future years. Nakano would invoke this moment again and again as the two countries grew apart. At the nadir of Sino-Japanese relations in the summer of 1939 – two years into the war between Japan and China – Nakano demanded that both countries lay their differences aside and return to the Tōyama-ism and Sun Yat-sen-ism of the period following 1905.<sup>128</sup> Nakano, however, was not aware that his ideal for relations between Japan and China contained an element of inequality, with Japan always leading China (and other Asian nations). Thus, Nakano pointed out how “Inukai, Tōyama and other senior [Japanese political] figures would take care of the young Chinese revolutionaries as if they were their own sons.”<sup>129</sup> Describing his personal relations with Chinese students, Nakano wrote, similarly, that his role was to “...lead them, wake them up, tell them that China needs to be developed. ... I would like to help those pitiful Chinese exchange students by extending our power westward ... This is our mandate from heaven.”<sup>130</sup> This element of implied inequality, which made Japan the senior party in the relationship and relegated China to junior status, continued to define Nakano's views on Japan's relations with other Asian neighbors.

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Another example of Nakano describing his first meetings with the Chinese revolutionaries in Tokyo can be found in Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, March 1939, p. 14 and following.

<sup>128</sup> See Nakano Seigō, Nakano Seigō, speech held June 2, 1939 at Seinen Kaikan, reprinted in “Decide Japan's Direction” [日本の動向を決定せよ], in *Tōtairiku*, July 1939, p. 71 and 72-73.

<sup>129</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The Revival of Stagnant Japan” [沈滞日本の更生] (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1931), p. 88-89.

<sup>130</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō: “Chinese Exchange Students in Japan” [日本留学支那学生] which is a subsection of “From my Waseda Home” [早稲田の里より] *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine* [同窓会雑誌], summer 1905, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 68.

In the more immediate short-term, exposure to Chinese expatriates afforded Nakano the opportunity to practice Chinese and familiarize himself with the Chinese way of thinking. Pan-Asianism, to which Nakano had been exposed in Fukuoka but which for lack of opportunity had remained a theoretical exercise, now for the first time became a live experience. His interest in Chinese affairs was stimulated through these contacts, and Nakano made China the topic of his graduation thesis, entitled “Chinese Affairs” [中国論]. Although the work’s contents remain unknown, it left an impression on Nakano’s professor Ukita Kazutami, who praised its style and argument, and attested to Nakano’s “uncommon talent” [非凡の天稟].

### **Construction of Identity**

Nakano’s shift from relatively passive recipient of outside influences to creator of his own identity is best symbolized by his name change at age 17. Changing one’s name and using different pen names was not uncommon at the time and the new chosen name was often telling. In the summer of 1903, Nakano decided to drop his given name, Jintarō, and henceforth to use the name Masataka [正剛] instead. The two characters of his chosen name mean ‘just’ or ‘right’ [正] and ‘strength’ [剛]. Apart from his mother and himself, however, no one ever called him Masataka.<sup>131</sup> Most instead called him “Seigō,” which is another reading of the same two Chinese characters. Nakano did not object to being called “Seigō” and, indeed, probably even enjoyed it, for Seigō was similar to the name of his life-long idol Saigō Takamori. The fact that the first time he used this new name was to sign an article about the life of Saigō was surely no accident.<sup>132</sup>

The character Gō [剛 = strength], which makes up the second half of Seigō, reappeared in

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<sup>131</sup> When in Europe he used the signature “M. Nakano”, the “M.” presumably standing for “Masataka.” See Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 199.

<sup>132</sup> The article in question was “A Sketch of Saigō” [西郷南州の片影] in the *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine*, December 1903.

many of the names Nakano gave his pet dogs.<sup>133</sup> Recall that Nakano put such a high value on a dog's fighting strength that he gave them away if they lost; the anecdotes give a glimpse of the kind of strength he aspired to when he used the character in his own name.

Nakano took up the strength theme, this time combined with unruly wildness, again in the pen name “Jūbanba” [戎蛮馬], which Nakano used as a young journalist at the *Asahi News*. The name literally means “barbarian horse” or “wild horse.” By contrast, a desire to be similar to people he admired motivated the choice of some of his later pen names. The most frequently used of these, Kōdō [耕堂], was a play on pen names used by Inukai Tsuyoshi (pen name Bokudō [木堂]) and Ozaki Yukio (pen name Gōdō [号堂]) as it used the second character Dō [堂].<sup>134</sup>

Nakano's search for his own identity took on a much deeper and more significant form in his insistence on holding – indeed, clinging – to his samurai background. Like his mother, who insisted that she hailed from a family of sake brewers while omitting the fact that they also made soy sauce, Nakano dwelled long on the fact that his forefathers had been samurai, conveniently forgetting that by the time he was born his family ran a pawn shop. That Nakano's claim to samurai status had always been tenuous and was irrelevant by the time he was born is less important than the tenacity with which he held onto it.<sup>135</sup> Asked about his family background, his

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<sup>133</sup> In the course of his life, Nakano almost always had one or more dogs that he would let fight against other dogs. Many of the names he gave them stress martial qualities and contained the character Gō [剛]. One of his dogs was called “Mars” after the Roman god of war. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 624-25. His like for dog fights waned only in his late 40s, but even thereafter he would continue to call his dogs Gō [剛]. By contrast the names he gave to his horses (he took up horse-back riding around the same time) were much more peaceful, e.g. Nukiyama [抜山] taken from a poem, Shingetsu or New Moon [新月], Kinsei [キンセイ], Great Dipper or Hokuto [北斗] and Goblet or Taihaku [太白]. Only once did he use the character Gō in a horse name ( “Kingō” [金剛]). See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 715.

<sup>134</sup> Another penname used by Nakano while a student at Waseda and writing for Miyake Setsurei's magazine, *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], was Kōdō [浩洞], homonym with his later penname. The second character of it was intended to mimic the sound of the second character of Inukai's and Ozaki's penname's second character. Both 堂 and 洞 are pronounced Dō.

<sup>135</sup> According to Nakano Yasuo, the family's rank was only passed to the first-born son in line, which meant that Nakano's father, being the second-born, was left out. Nakano's father had bought the title of the

standard reply was: “I come from a samurai family.” In one of his most private (i.e., apolitical) pieces, he described himself as a “son from Kyūshū who has been greatly exposed to the feudal way of the warrior.”<sup>136</sup> Whenever his sons jokingly wondered whether their forefathers had not actually been mere foot soldiers in the samurai hierarchy, Nakano stressed that they had been full-fledged samurai. He even tried to raise his sons as samurai: During the February 1936 uprising, he took them to see the bloodstained barricades on the grounds that “a revolution has broken out. As sons of a samurai, you must get used to the sight of fires and battles.”<sup>137</sup> Given that the government had abolished the samurai status and all privileges that went with it, and that the term had been rendered – at least officially – meaningless, Nakano’s upholding of samurai values (or the external trappings thereof) was clearly a deliberate choice to go against the grain of the time. Some have decried Nakano as a pretentious “stylist” [スタイリスト]<sup>138</sup> for his choice. Nakano’s decision to salvage a samurai ethos in the 20th century, in turn, informed many subsequent choices: his taste for martial arts, horseback riding, the Chinese classics, taken together with his dislike for mathematics and money-making (i.e., skills and activities associated with the merchant class); the choice of a career in politics (after he had been barred from a career in the military due

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samurai [士族の籍は、士族の株を買って得た], making talk about the family’s samurai status an “empty lie” [虚妄]. Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 131. In the census of 1873, when two million of the 33 million Japanese people were still counted as samurai, Nakano’s father was probably not among them and even if he was, he surely lost the samurai status with the abolition of the four classes carried out in the course of the Meiji reforms.

<sup>136</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Hold on, Father” [シッカリシロ・チチ] in Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く] (Tokyo, 1938), p. 317.

<sup>137</sup> The quote can be found in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p.130. Exposing their sons to the sight of executions, torture and ritual suicides with the aim of hardening their character seems to have been common practice among samurai. Ozaki Yukio writes how as a child his father made him watch “torture, beheadings and ritual suicides.” Ozaki Yukio, “The Autobiography of Ozaki Yukio: the Struggle for Constitutional Government in Japan”, trans. Fujiko Hara, (Princeton, 2001), p. 12-14.

<sup>138</sup> Yoneda Ryūji [米田龍二]; “Exemplary Biographies of the Diet, No.9, Nakano Seigō, the crazy Stylist” [議会列伝9 中野正剛：狂躁のスタイリスト] in *Gekkan Jiyū-Minshu* (Jimintō) [月刊自由民主 (自民党)] Nr. 462 September 1991, p. 190.



to his leg injury); the manner of his suicide (traditional *seppuku*), as well as many other decisions in Nakano's life may be simply expressions of his character, talents and circumstance. They may also, however, be seen – and, according to this author, must be seen - as an attempt to live his life as a modern samurai.

The word “samurai” can mean many different things and, in the course of his life, Nakano gave it a particular and ever more precise meaning through both words and actions. The direction and the spectrum within which he moved was set during his formative years, for among the many former samurai of his youth in Fukuoka - relatives, friends and those who were simply brought to his attention through various accounts or random encounters - he clearly felt closer to those discontent with the political order than to those who reconciled themselves with the situation and tried to make the best of it (on occasion with success). Stories of Fukuoka samurai successfully making a career in the Meiji society – examples of whom include Kaneko Kentarō<sup>139</sup>, Dan Takuma<sup>140</sup>, Kurino Shin'ichirō<sup>141</sup>, Akashi Motojirō<sup>142</sup>, and even Nakano's cousin, Nakano Tasaburō<sup>143</sup> – may have caught Nakano's attention but not his imagination. His heart, thoughts and loyalty stayed with the discontented, those who opposed the political establishment and, especially, the rebels who fought it.

The ideal that governed, perhaps even dominated, Nakano's chosen identity was that of the

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<sup>139</sup> Kaneko Kentarō [金子賢太郎] (1853-1942), bureaucrat and politician who contributed to the drafting of the Meiji Constitution.

<sup>140</sup> Dan Takuma [團琢磨] (1858 – 1932), Japanese businessman and director of the Mitsui Zaibatsu.

<sup>141</sup> Kurino Shin'ichirō [栗野慎一郎] (1851 - 1937), career diplomat who in his earlier years on account of his promise he was given a grant by the Han authorities to study at Harvard University.

<sup>142</sup> Akashi Motojirō [明石 元二郎] (1864 – 1919), career army officer who eventually became governor of Taiwan.

<sup>143</sup> Nakano's cousin Tasaburō [中野太三郎] (1879 - 1941) was a graduate of the faculty of law of Tokyo Imperial University and later served as secretary to Itō Hirobumi in Korea before becoming provincial governor of Pyongan province in northern Korea.

“Satsuma *hayato*.” The “idealized personality,” Tetsuo Najita noted, is “specific to Satsuma, but revered by all in Kyūshū” and epitomized by the famed Saigō Takamori. This romantic hero was a *bushi* (or samurai) of a unique type. He was loyal and full of love for the common folk, but he was also a rebel.”<sup>144</sup> If a samurai is what Nakano was, then a Satsuma *hayato* such as Saigō is what he wanted to become.

Once Nakano chose this rebel identity, the decision was reflected in subsequent actions and informed many choices and attitudes. This is most obviously so in his lifelong adoration for two historical rebels, Saigō Takamori and Ōshio Heihachirō. As a youth, Nakano read books by or about the two rebels and throughout his life these two names reappear often in speeches and writings.<sup>145</sup> If Nakano had any idol, it was Saigō Takamori followed – with some distance – by Ōshio Heihachirō. According to Nakano, their lives were ideals to be emulated, their thoughts contained truths to be remembered and their actions were standards to be used in judging others and oneself.

Likewise, Nakano’s interest in the teachings of Wang-Yang-ming, a philosophy espoused by many of Japan’s rebels, can also be seen as just another aspect of Nakano’s rebelliousness. Though less evident in Nakano’s writing than his admiration for Saigō and Ōshio, the influence of Wang’s philosophy was probably more important simply because it addressed more fundamental and universal problems.

Nakano’s populism – so salient a feature of his life that Oates titled his biography of Nakano “A Populist in Modern Japan” – was Nakano’s rendition of what Najita calls “love for the

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<sup>144</sup> See Najita, Tetsuo “Nakano Seigō and the Spirit of the Meiji Restoration in Twentieth-Century Japan” in “Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan”, ed. James Morely (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 376-77.

<sup>145</sup> The already mentioned “A Sketch of Saigō” [西郷南州の片影], *Shūyūkan Alumni Magazine*, December 1903 is but the earliest written expression of Nakano’s adoration. Later works include “Remembering Ōshio Heihachirō” [大塩平八郎を憶ふ] and “Saigō Nanshū” [西郷南州], both in Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く] (Tokyo, May, 1938).

common folk.” In his early years, this love translated into Nakano’s glorification of the participants in the various samurai uprisings of the early Meiji years, followed by his sympathy for activists of the Meiji Freedom and People’s Rights Movement. In later years, Nakano’s populism led him to support the champions of constitutional government, party politics and universal suffrage. Finally, the impulse found expression in his fascination with the populist elements of the European fascist movements. The rebel element of the Satsuma *hayato* identity led him to vilify the *genrō*, the Satsuma-Chōshū cliques and finally the Japanese civil and military bureaucracies. For all the twists and turns of Nakano’s life, the one continuity was his opposition to the status quo - an opposition that derived its legitimacy from his professed love for and understanding of the people.

One is tempted to add to Najita by noting that through his idolization of and identification with rebels such as Saigō Takamori and Ōshio Heihachirō, Nakano also identified with the “nobility of failure.”<sup>146</sup> Among the many people Nakano admired during his life, only the failures earned his continued admiration. One does not find a single example of a success among Nakano’s heroes, and the few that eventually did succeed – such as Inukai Tsuyoshi – did so only after Nakano had broken with them. Just as the needle of a compass always points north, Nakano’s sympathy was reliably directed toward the vanquished and downtrodden. Therein lies one key to understanding his own failure.

## **Conclusions**

Of the many influences and experiences that shaped Nakano’s formative period, some were to prove particularly significant. First and foremost was his identification with the political radicalism of Southwest Japan, which was perhaps a reflection of his rebellious and bellicose

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<sup>146</sup> Ivan Morris, “Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan” (New York, 1975).

character. Nakano not only sought the patronage of radical Genyōsha activists such as Tōyama, but also adopted their philosophy. He embraced their radical interpretations of Wang Yang-ming's ideas and their adoration for rebels and revolutionaries, especially Saigō Takamori. Tōyama also brought Nakano into contact with Pan-Asian thought, which became an important dimension of his life and thought.

Nakano's samurai heritage gave direction to his future life, which can be seen as the struggle of a former insider (member of the ruling class) struggling to regain entry into government circles. His leg injury and strong literary talents pushed Nakano to enter politics not via a career in the army, as he had originally hoped, but through journalism. Writing for his school's *Alumni Magazine* and Miyake's *Japan and the Japanese* gave him the confidence that he could make a living by writing.

Nakano's formal training in Western political and economic thought, as well as in the Chinese classics, provided him with the intellectual instruments he would need in the days to come. His future works would be a rich blend of Chinese philosophy, Asian history and Western social thought, lending his words both the legitimacy of Asian tradition and the authority of modern science. Combined with Nakano's sharp mind, these were to become powerful weapons.

In spite of his many extracurricular commitments and the very brief answers in his final exams at university, Nakano graduated third in his class in the summer of 1909. On the day of his graduation, Nakano had more than one reason to be proud. Not only had he graduated near the top of his university class and gained exposure to Western political philosophy and economic thought, he had also cultivated knowledge of China, practiced *jūdō* and shouldered financial responsibility for his entire family. No mean achievement for a 23-year old.

## Chapter 2: Writing for a Living

### Introduction

A year before entering politics in 1920, Nakano wrote: “I have two professions: writing and politics [文章経国]. Politics is the aim; writing is the means.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this sort of reasoning led him, after graduating from university, to embark on a career in journalism and use it as a stepping stone toward politics. Literary talent and Nakano’s student experience as a professional writer facilitated the choice. Moreover, in this era it was common for an aspiring politician to start off as a journalist. The high road for a politician ran through a career in the civilian or military bureaucracy, but journalism was a well-trod alternative path followed by people such as Hara Kei, Ozaki Yukio and Nakano’s mentor Inukai Tsuyoshi. Writing offered Nakano a chance to make himself known to a wide audience as a sharp-tongued political commentator while he deepened his understanding of social, economic and political issues. As Japan’s electorate gradually expanded, bringing the masses onto the country’s political stage, Nakano’s thorough understanding of the workings of mass media (which, in his lifetime was mainly newspapers) proved an invaluable asset.

The eleven years during which Nakano worked as a journalist (1909-20) were turbulent globally (one World War, as well as the Chinese and Russian revolutions), domestically (the Movements to Protect the Constitution, scandals, rice riots, and economic booms and busts) and personally. Nakano’s path was checkered and unpredictable. He first worked for the *Tokyo Daily News*, then switched after less than a year to the *Tokyo Asahi News*, traveled to China, was sent to work at the *Asahi News*’ Osaka office, married, was posted to Korea as the paper’s overseas

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<sup>1</sup> Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction” [世界改造の巷より], (Tokyo: Tōhōjirion-sha, April 1919), p. 1.

correspondent, had a son, returned to Tokyo, traveled the world with a stop in England to study, returned to Japan, quit the *Asahi News*, started working for a magazine, ran for election (and lost), had another son, and then traveled to Europe to cover the Peace Conference in Paris. On top of all that, he somehow managed to write half a dozen books.

Two political developments serve as dominant orientation points during this colorful and messy chapter in Nakano's life. The first is the trend toward "constitutional government," that is the replacement of "transcendental cabinets" composed of *genrō*, *hambatsu* cliques, or bureaucrats by "party cabinets" staffed by party politicians who were Diet members. The struggle for constitutional government predated Nakano's entry into journalism but reached an apex in his newspaperman years, especially with Japan's first lasting party cabinet in 1918.

The second dominant political issue for Nakano was Japan's role in the world. After victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, Japan had been seen by many young Asians as the great hope of the East against the imperialist West - a model to be emulated, even a leader to be followed. Nakano socialized and sympathized with students from China and other Asian nations who had flocked to Japan to study its example, but much to his and their disappointment, Japanese governments in the years 1905-20 did not share that vision. The state response to the Chinese revolution of 1911, the presentation of the notorious 21 Demands during WW1 and Japan's rule in Korea showed this only too clearly. At the end of the 1910s, Nakano wrote with disappointment that Japan had chosen to be the "last among the strong rather than the first among the weak."<sup>2</sup>

This chapter's first portion offers a detailed chronological account of Nakano's life from 1909 to 1920. The second part examines Nakano's intellectual reaction to the political

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<sup>2</sup> Nakano Seigō "Editorial: Advice to Japanese and Chinese Statesmen" [時論：日支政客に誨う], in *Tōhōjiron*, May 1918, p. 6.

developments of his day; the section is organized thematically to provide a point of reference or orientation against which later developments in Nakano's thinking can be judged.

### **First Job**

In July 1909, together with his classmate Kazami Akira, Nakano landed a job with the *Tokyo Daily News* [東京日日新聞], the precursor of today's *Mainichi Shimbun* [毎日新聞]. At the time, the paper was not the top name in journalism. Circulation was roughly 130,000 copies<sup>3</sup> and the paper was continuously in the red. Staff fluctuations were high and talented people were leaving the paper faster than they could be replaced. At 30 Yen a month, the pay Nakano and Kazami received was modest, obliging Nakano to continue borrowing money from Tōyama in order to support his family.<sup>4</sup>

Kazami was so unhappy with the work and the pay that he soon left the paper. Nakano stayed on, explaining his motivation to his sweetheart and former nurse, Yukiko Noguchi:

“Every day I play at the *Daily News*. During the mornings I have lots of free time, but from one to three in the afternoon I write ... While here, I will earnestly and without distraction dedicate myself to studying and writing articles on politics. Today, I am lying low and biding my time, but I believe that this is only a means to nurture the skills that will allow me to stand up on another day.”<sup>5</sup>

His patience was rewarded. Nakano's first assignment brought him to Northeastern Japan, where he traveled as part of a group of journalists invited by the local government to write about developments in these traditionally backward and impoverished areas. While his fellow

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<sup>3</sup> In 1909 circulation was 134,123 copies according to the *Tokyo Daily News* eds., “Seventy Year History of the *Tokyo Daily*” [東日七十年史] (Tokyo: Tokyo Daily News, 1941).

<sup>4</sup> In 1910, the starting salary of a university graduate was 35 Yen. See Iwasaki Jirō [岩崎爾郎], “Price Conditions over 100 Years” [物価の世相 100年], (Tokyo, 1982), p. 286-300.

<sup>5</sup> Nakano Seigō in a letter to Yukiko Noguchi, quoted in Inomata, p. 43.

journalists enjoyed the many welcome parties involving rich food and heavy drinking, Nakano concentrated on writing reports of what he saw and heard. His positive and optimistic dispatches to Tokyo were greatly appreciated by readers (especially by those in the Northeast). The reports also caught the attention of the *Tokyo Daily's* editor-in-chief, Ōmachi Keigetsu,<sup>6</sup> who told Nakano upon his return that his writing was good. Ōmachi said, in fact, that Nakano was too talented to rot away in a place such as the *Tokyo Daily*.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Tokyo Asahi**

This high opinion of Nakano's talents was shared by Ikebe Sanzan,<sup>8</sup> editor-in-chief of the *Asahi News*, who went out of his way to entice Nakano to work for him. Less than half a year after joining the *Tokyo Daily*, Nakano gladly quit his job and joined the more prestigious *Tokyo Asahi News*, doubling his pay to 60 Yen a month.<sup>9</sup> With a circulation of almost 260,000 copies, the *Asahi* also offered Nakano the opportunity to reach a far-larger audience than he did at the *Tokyo Daily News*.<sup>10</sup> Relieved and content, Nakano told Noguchi: "I have so far hidden the fact that I have lived my life with my back against the wall, depending on borrowed money. ... The

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<sup>6</sup> Ōmachi Keigetsu [大町桂月] (1869 – 1925), journalist, poet, essayist and critic.

<sup>7</sup> See Inomata p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> Ikebe Sanzan (池辺三山) (1864 - 1912) is counted together with Tokutomi Sohō and Kuga Katsunan among the three great journalists of Meiji Japan.

<sup>9</sup> Generally speaking, graduates from private universities earned 25 Yen a month at the *Asahi*, while those from the imperial universities started with 30 Yen a month. Nakano's starting salary of 60 Yen per month was thus very generous and justified on the grounds that he brought some previous work experience to the job.

<sup>10</sup> Circulation of the *Asahi News* during Nakano's stay at the company was as follows: 257,472 copies in 1909, 277,392 copies in 1910, 303,322 copies in 1911, and 316,430 copies in 1912. (source: letter from the *Asahi News* Company to the author dated July 22, 2009).



*Tokyo Asahi* is the top newspaper in Japan and ... using it as my base, I will be able to make a contribution to Japan's political world.”<sup>11</sup>

As it happened, Nakano's contribution to Japan's political world had to wait a while. His accomplishments during his first year or two at the *Asahi* are clouded in darkness. Whatever articles he wrote may or may not have been published; if they were, they did not carry his name, so it is impossible to attribute them to him. Lack of fame and attention, however, did not dent Nakano's confidence. One of his colleagues recalls that from the beginning, Nakano was “ambitious, perhaps boastful, full of energy, and ... looked down on his peers.”<sup>12</sup> With time, this attitude grew into outright arrogance and eventually isolated Nakano within the editorial office. Nakano's relationship with editor-in-chief, Ikebe Sanzan, who had invited Nakano to join the *Asahi*, also grew distant, though mainly because of differences in political opinion. Instead, Nakano was drawn to the more progressive Yugeta Sei'ichi.<sup>13</sup>

### **Politicians in and out of Power**

Having spent almost two years at the *Asahi* in relative obscurity, Nakano was given a chance in early 1911. Encouraged by Yugeta, he wrote a series of ten character studies entitled “War on all Fronts - Politicians In and Out of Power,” which laid the foundation of his journalistic fame. The series, which started in late spring of that year and was published under the pen name “Jūbanba,”<sup>14</sup> triggered great interest and some speculation among the readers as to the author's real identity. Many thought the essays had been written by Ikebe. The numerous letters of praise that readers mistakenly sent Ikebe – many of which expressed surprise that he should be

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<sup>11</sup> Nakano in a letter to Yukiko Noguchi quoted in Inomata, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> A former colleague of Nakano's quoted in Inomata p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> Yugeta Sei'ichi [弓削田精一] (1869 – 1937), journalist and Nakano's mentor within the *Asahi News*.

<sup>14</sup> Jūbanba [戎蛮馬] literally means “barbarian horse” or “wild horse.” See Inomata p. 50.

able to write such ‘young’ prose despite his advanced age – brought a melancholic smile to Ikebe’s face. The articles were so successful that they were subsequently republished in a book.<sup>15</sup>

The series opened with a statement about being “fed up” with Japan’s politics, which at the time were characterized by transcendental cabinets formed alternately by Katsura Tarō<sup>16</sup> or Saionji Kinmochi<sup>17</sup> and this with such regularity that the decade from 1903 to 1913 would come to be known as the Katsura-Saionji era [桂園時代]. Nakano wrote that despite the suggestion of change implied by the back-and-forth of cabinets between the conservative Katsura, a military man and member of the Yamagata faction, and the more liberal but firmly established Saionji only masked an underlying political stalemate that obstructed progress toward true party cabinets. Describing Katsura as cruel and calculating – “first among the vulgar” [大俗公] – and Saionji as weak and yielding – “last among the elegant” [大通侯], Nakano compared the political battles between the two men with boring matches between two equally strong *sumō* wrestlers. Nakano wondered when a new “*yokozuna*” (i.e. *sumō* champion) would step up to “replace both Katsura and Saionji” and establish constitutional government. He then searched for a suitable challenger among the political parties’ rising stars.

In the remaining eight character studies, Nakano profiled the lives and personalities of Ōura Kanetake, Gotō Shimpei, Hirata Tōsuke, Hara Kei, Matsuda Masahisa, Inukai Tsuyoshi, Ōishi Masami, and Terauchi Masatake.<sup>18</sup> In writing their (by and large accurate) biographies,

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<sup>15</sup> Nakano Seigō “War on All Fronts - Politicians In and Out of Power” [八面鋒一朝野の政治家], (Tokyo, October 1911).

<sup>16</sup> Katsura Tarō (桂 太郎) (1848-1913), Japanese military man, politician, Prime Minister and second generation *genrō*.

<sup>17</sup> Prince Saionji Kinmochi (西園寺 公望) (1849 – 1940), Japanese politician, twice Prime Minister and longest surviving *genrō*.

<sup>18</sup> Ōura Kanetake (大浦 兼武) (1850 - 1918), bureaucrat and politician; Gotō Shimpei (後藤 新平) (1857 – 1929), medical doctor, high-ranking bureaucrat, and politician; Hirata Tōsuke (平田東助) (1849 – 1925) bureaucrat, politician and statesman; Hara Kei or Hara Takashi (原敬) (1856 – 1921), party politician and

Nakano also identified reasons why each man would fail to overcome *hambatsu* resistance to constitutional government. Most were unlikely to challenge the *hambatsu* cliques because they themselves were either by birth or marriage members thereof. Nakano pointed out that Terauchi was born in Chōshū, Ōura in Satsuma, and Ōishi in Tosa. Moreover, Hirata had married into the extended family of Yamagata, while Hara had married an adopted daughter of *genrō* Inoue. Even those not affiliated with the clans of the Restoration, however, failed to inspire Nakano's hope for change, as they often lacked personal qualities he deemed necessary for the task.

While Nakano's treatment of the politicians' backgrounds and careers was objective, he crossed over into judgment when discussing their personalities and character flaws, sometimes even insulting them outright. According to Nakano, Ōura, for instance, was "the loyal guard dog of the *hambatsu*" who could never break out of his policeman mold; Gotō "spineless" and lacking courage;<sup>19</sup> Hirata "seemingly upright and honest" but in fact a "thief who takes from the people;" Hara "too ready to compromise on his ideals;" Matsuda "powerful but incompetent," combining "incapability with endurance;" and Terauchi mediocre, lacking both "integrity and sagacity." The only exception was Inukai, whom Nakano had known and admired since his student days. Three of the character studies - those of Terauchi, Hara and Inukai - merit a closer look.

### **Terauchi**

As a member of the Yamagata faction, Terauchi represented what Nakano loathed about Japan's political system - that access to power was restricted to members of certain cliques. In Nakano's view, power had been handed down in a continuous line from the *genrō* oligarchs to junior members of their domains, and remained within these tight-knit political circles. This

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Prime Minister; Matsuda Masahisa (松田正久) (1847-1914), politician; Ōishi Masami (大石正巳) (1855 - 1935), politician; Terauchi Masatake (寺内正毅) (1852 - 1919), Army general, politician and Prime Minister.

<sup>19</sup> Nakano quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 89.

reactionary political arrangement, labeled clique (*hambatsu seiji* [藩閥政治]) or clan (*batsuzoku seiji* [閥族政治]) government, could be found not only in the civilian bureaucracies but also in the army, where it was maintained by Yamagata and his followers Kodama, Katsura and Terauchi.

Nakano's attack on Terauchi was twofold. First, following the line of argument used so often by 'men of purpose' during the restoration some forty years earlier, Nakano claimed that assigning position and power by criteria other than merit could only weaken the country. He argued that Terauchi had not risen within the army's ranks because of battlefield valor, noting that an injury received during the Satsuma campaign had condemned Terauchi to serve most of his career in the rear, performing functions that Nakano believed were "much despised by vigorous military men."<sup>20</sup> The only reason the "rubber-stamping bureaucrat"<sup>21</sup> had risen through the ranks was the fact that he was a man from the domain of Chōshū, protected by other men from Chōshū, such as Yamagata, Kodama, and Katsura. Such meritless promotion was unfortunate in and of itself, but Terauchi's determination to perpetuate the system by promoting and protecting juniors from the domain of Chōshū was even worse. Nakano warned readers that this would "contribute to the weakening of the nation's armed forces."<sup>22</sup>

Second, Nakano expanded his critique to include the subject of military interference in politics. He took up the theme repeatedly in the future, leading some biographers to cast him incorrectly as an anti-militarist. Nakano wrote:

"That the Emperor does not rejoice when military men indulge themselves in politics has already been made clear in the [imperial] rescript [to soldiers and sailors]... Military men should aspire to show courage on the battlefield. That is where the flower of the warrior blossoms. Yet ever since military politicians have made names for

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<sup>20</sup> Nakano Seigō "War on All Fronts - Politicians In and Out of Power" [八面鋒一朝野の政治家]; (Tokyo, October 1911), p. 219.

<sup>21</sup> The exact term is "Mekura-Han-Oshi" [盲判押し] literally meaning a man who will "blindly stamp." Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 237-38.

themselves in the realm and wielded their authority in the world, the cadets at the military academy have completely changed the ideals [they pursue]. They no longer aim to cut down enemies and take fortresses. Instead, they want to decorate their breasts with medals and become flattered politicians who are addressed as ‘Your Excellency’.”<sup>23</sup>

Nakano concluded the essay on Terauchi by writing: “You are without wisdom and a man of narrow measure. If you were ever to become a politician, your policies would fail and your reputation would be ruined.”<sup>24</sup> Nakano added that the only reason he “felt compelled to include such a mediocre warrior as Terauchi in the roster of politicians in and out of power” was because he needed a sort of counterweight to the others “who did not display as many weaknesses.”<sup>25</sup> Terauchi’s rise, however, continued despite Nakano’s criticism. He served as governor of Korea and, from 1916 to 1918, as Japan’s 18th Prime Minister. In both positions Nakano would attack him, making this essay just the starting point of an ongoing enmity.

### **Hara**

Compared with his skewering of Terauchi and most of the other profiled politicians, Nakano’s take on Hara was mildly critical and his treatment of Inukai generous, even laudatory. According to Nakano, Hara had backbone, was outspoken, even outstanding, and did not give up his lofty ideals easily. While connected to the *hambatsu* through marriage, Hara had not been corrupted by them. And yet, Nakano did not believe Hara would ever confront the *hambatsu* cliques, let alone overcome the system of transcendental cabinets, because he was too willing to compromise on essential points.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 256 – 259.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

Hara's subsequent success – he formed Japan's first pure party cabinet in 1918, making him the closest to the “*yokozuna*”-like figure that Nakano had hoped for – proved Nakano wrong. In Hara's case, willingness to - no, mastery of - compromise led to such success that a later biographer made compromise the essential feature of Hara's political oeuvre.<sup>26</sup> One wonders why Nakano had so little appreciation for this supremely successful tactic, even after Hara's death.<sup>27</sup>

### **Inukai**

The study of Inukai, who alone among the ten politicians received an uncritically positive treatment, is in many ways the mirror image of Nakano's study of Hara. Where Nakano criticized Hara for his willingness to compromise easily, he praised Inukai for his unwillingness to do so. In describing the latter's life – in particular his rebellion against school regulations, his editors, and later the powerful political establishment – Nakano argued that “opposition runs through his life from beginning to end,” making him an “opposition politician” through and through. This stance “made all those who hold power his political enemies” and Nakano predicted that Inukai - “the leading character of the netherworld” - would “never come to the surface [i.e., the top].”<sup>28</sup>

Inukai's unwillingness to compromise on essential matters was, however, not as strong as Nakano thought initially. Inukai learned from Hara's example and eventually made enough compromises (far too many, in Nakano's view) to become Japan's Prime Minister. Indeed, if

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<sup>26</sup> Tetsuo Najita even titled his biography of Hara: “Hara Kei and the Politics of Compromise” (Cambridge, 1967).

<sup>27</sup> Even after Hara's assassination in 1921, Nakano's judgment of Hara remained harsh: “Modern Japan is being controlled in all respects by the worship of the powerful [大事主義]. ... Hara Kei understood this point, and in acting on it he was certainly the best of his generation. First of all he submitted to the *genrō* who held the key to power. .... Through worshipping the mighty he was able to gain power, but ... the spirit that made him submit to the *genrō*, was the same spirit that made him ignore the people.” Nakano Seigō, “The Environment of the Takahashi Cabinet” [高橋内閣の環境], in *Tōhōjiron*, December 1922 (quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 321).

<sup>28</sup> Nakano Seigō, “War on All Fronts - Politicians In and Out of Power”, p. 148.

anyone turned out to be the eternal “character of the netherworld” who never rose “to the surface,” it was Nakano, on account of his uncompromising stance. At the time, however, Nakano’s predictions about Inukai did not seem so far-fetched and the latter is said to have wondered after reading Nakano’s article: “Maybe Nakano is the one who knows me?” [われを知るもの、それ中野か?].<sup>29</sup>

### **The Chinese Revolution**

Not long after Nakano finished “Politicians In and Out Of Power,” the question of how to deal with the Chinese revolution intensified the conflict that had been smoldering at the *Asahi* between the conservatives, represented by Ikebe and Natsume Sōseki, and the more radically progressive group led by Yugeta and Nakano. While the conservatives argued for intervention on behalf of the government (echoing similar calls by Yamagata, the army and Tokutomi Sohō), Yugeta and Nakano (echoing Inukai, Tōyama, Hara Kei, Saionji, etc.) opposed it and supported the revolutionaries.

The conflict between Yugeta and Ikebe (soon to be succeeded by Matsuyama Chūjirō<sup>30</sup>) eventually became one motive behind Yugeta’s resignation in December 1915, but at this stage it led only to his and Nakano’s transfer to the Osaka office. There they were joined by newcomers Ogata Taketora - who had followed Nakano from Waseda into journalism - and Ōnishi Itsuki,<sup>31</sup> another young man from Fukuoka who had studied in China. It did not take long for Nakano to integrate the two newcomers into the Yugeta faction.

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<sup>29</sup> Inukai Tsuyoshi quoted in Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], “Nakano Seigō and the Way of the Lion” [獅子の道 中野正剛], (Tokyo, 1986), p. 295.

<sup>30</sup> Matsuyama Chūjirō [松山忠二郎] (1870 – 1942), journalist.

<sup>31</sup> Ōnishi Itsuki (or Sai) (大西 齋) (1887 – 1947) journalist and China expert.

Nakano soon joined vocally in the ongoing debate over whether Japan should interfere in the revolution unfolding on the Chinese mainland. Tokutomi Sohō had fired the opening shot in the debate, arguing the case for intervention in an article called “Fire on the Further Shore” [対岸の火]. Tokutomi’s article agitated for Japan’s intervention on behalf of the ailing Qing government on the grounds that Japan might otherwise soon find itself wedged between two republics - America to the east and China to the west – both of which could only “clash with our [Japan’s] Emperor-centric ideology [皇室中心主義].” Warning that “the plague is a material disease, and republicanism is an abstract one,”<sup>32</sup> Tokutomi argued both should be fought.

In an article aptly titled “Conflagration on the Further Shore” [対岸の火災], Nakano countered that Tokutomi’s fear that a Chinese republic would “pose a temptation for the people of our own nation, putting in danger the foundation of our nation’s political essence [国体],”<sup>33</sup> was unfounded:

“Just as a current will not flow through matter that is not conducive, our people are not conductors of the republican current. Even if the revolutionary events in China were to have an effect on our nation, it would not be in the form of a revolution aimed against our monarchy.”<sup>34</sup>

Nakano proceeded to argue that by focusing on Japan’s narrow interest in this question, Tokutomi risked sacrificing the larger good - namely, China’s right to self-determination. Given the Qing dynasty’s corrupt nature, a revolution was an inevitable process toward the realization of popular will. According to Nakano, while Tokutomi was interested in maintaining Japan’s status quo, he should have been more concerned about the Chinese people:

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<sup>32</sup> Tokutomi Sohō quoted in Inomata p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Conflagration on the other Shore” [対岸の火災] quoted in Inomata p. 60-61.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 109.



“Why are you needlessly worrying about the fire on the other shore and warning about the effects that this might have [on Japan]? Why are you wasting your efforts and supporting the Qing dynasty, which cannot stand by itself any longer, thus risking turning the 400 million people [of China] into [your] bitter enemies? If we [Japanese] were to use the conflagration in our neighboring country as a golden opportunity to interfere under the pretence of loyalty [i.e. to the dynasty 勤皇] ... it would be a very short-sighted calculation of our national interest ... it would be an act of turning a benevolent Japan [仁義日本] into a predatory Japan [虎狼日本].”<sup>35</sup>

At the end of 1911, the *Asahi News* sent Nakano to China to cover the unfolding events. He left in mid-December and, once there, traveled with Inukai and Tōyama, acting as their interpreter while reporting for the *Asahi*. Over the following weeks he met with many Chinese leaders, - including Huang Xing [黃興], then head of the revolutionary army, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the soon-to-be president of the new Chinese republic - as well as many lesser figures.<sup>36</sup>

Experiencing the chaotic situation in China first-hand did not weaken Nakano’s support for the revolutionary cause. Only in his private correspondence did Nakano voice some reservations about Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s ability as a leader in these trying circumstances, describing him as “weak” [輕卒] and doubting whether he was “actually capable of ruling the realm.”<sup>37</sup> Aware of the many problems that lay ahead, Nakano was nevertheless optimistic, expressing “great hopes for the new nation.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., quoted in Inomata p. 61.

<sup>36</sup> Nakano described the meetings with Dr. Sun Yat-sen and Huang Xing in an article published January 8, 1912 in the *Asahi News*, reprinted in Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く], (Tokyo, May, 1938), p. 274-77. Lesser figures which Nakano met at the time included Wang Ching-wei [汪兆銘], who during the Sino-Japanese War became head of the Japanese puppet government in China, but also Nakano’s Chinese friends from Waseda such as Lin Chō-min [林長民] and Shin Ch’un-ken [岑春愷] father of the Chinese student who had boarded at Nakano’s house during his Waseda years.

<sup>37</sup> Nakano in a letter to his superior Yugeta Sei’ichi quoted in Inomata p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata p. 65.

### **On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era**

Upon his return from China, Nakano began working on a history of the Meiji Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. The work was published in 101 installments between October 1912 and January 1913. Given the success of Nakano's previous writing, these dispatches were displayed prominently within the *Asahi* News, appearing as lead articles in the editorial section and sometimes covering as much as half a page. Since the installments were published daily, the workload was considerable. In retrospect, Nakano recalled: "I wrote as if I had drunken castor oil and gotten [verbal] diarrhea."<sup>39</sup> Yet the work was worth the effort, for once again the series turned out to be popular with readers and well-received by critics.<sup>40</sup> After the last article had been published, it did not take long for the entire series to be republished as a book under the title "On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era."<sup>41</sup>

As in the past, Nakano's writing continued to focus on individuals whom he deemed either great heroes such as Saigō (and, to some extent, Inoue and Ōkubo), or, more frequently, immoral villains. Nakano accordingly peppered his narrative with always moralistic, often critical and not infrequently insulting personal portraits.<sup>42</sup> As Ikebe wrote in the book's preface, these personal attacks were unlikely to win Nakano friendships that he might need if he ever intended to enter politics.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 116 and p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> An overview of the different critiques can be found in Inomata p. 77-78.

<sup>41</sup> Nakano Seigō, "On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era" [明治民権史論], (Tokyo, 1913). The book was republished in 1994 under the same title by Ashi-shobō Publishing [葦書房] in Fukuoka.

<sup>42</sup> Thus Nakano calls Iwakura Tomomi "the head of the stubborn party" [頑固党の巨魁], and party politician Hayashi Yūzō a "whore of the political world" [政界の醜業婦]. Nakano likened Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru "to stray dogs, who will transmit the disease that will kill even a Buddha." All quotes taken from Inomata, p. 75-76.

<sup>43</sup> Ikebe Sanzan in the preface of Nakano Seigō, "On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era".

In appearance and structure, “On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era” was truly what it purported to be - namely, a history of the Meiji Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. Yet, as early as the introduction, Nakano states that the “purpose of this history is certainly not to discuss the details of historical facts” but rather to “study the origins of the stagnation of today’s political world, with the hope of outlining” a way to reverse the decline in Japanese politics.<sup>44</sup> And decline was the dominant trend that Nakano found in the previous 44 years.

The start of the Meiji period, the Meiji Restoration, had been promising enough. Following what Nakano considered the “natural trend toward popular nationalism,”<sup>45</sup> the Restoration - “an unheard-of grand event” driven by an “outburst of vitality of the people bottled up during 300 years under the *bakufu* government” - had “destroyed a system of class-based nationalism [等族国家主義] and instead established a system of citizen-based nationalism [公民国家主義].”<sup>46</sup> According to Nakano, the radically popular spirit of the Restoration had:

“... been fully expressed in the Charter Oath. Breaking with the previous evil customs and based on universal justice, it established deliberative assemblies to decide all public matters by open discussion. ...To expand this spirit ... plan the development of the nation and increase the well-being of the people is both the duty and right of our Empire’s subjects.”<sup>47</sup>

In Nakano’s view, the Charter Oath made the Restoration a “radical” and “revolutionary event.”<sup>48</sup> By promising social mobility, legal equality and political participation, the Charter

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<sup>44</sup> Nakano Seigō, “On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era”, p. 74.

<sup>45</sup> Nakano quoted in (and translated by) Tetsuo Najita, “Nakano Seigō and the Spirit of the Meiji Restoration in Twentieth-Century Japan” in “Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan”, ed. James Morely (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) p. 381.

<sup>46</sup> Quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, “On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era”, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 495-96.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 7-15.

“liberated the people from historical obscurity.”<sup>49</sup> Consequently, the history of the Meiji period had to be read as a struggle between those trying to fulfill this promise and those trying to obstruct that fulfillment.

Initially, the young Meiji government was committed to carrying out the promise made in the Charter Oath. Soon, however, some of its members “formed cliques to pursue their interest and protect their rights, and in doing so clouded universal justice and returned to the old vices. Assemblies were not set up, public debate was not led and the spirit of the Restoration suddenly lost its impetus.”<sup>50</sup>

Not all the Meiji leaders abandoned the spirit of the Restoration so easily. Saigō Takamori and those around him tried to uphold “honor and integrity” [名節論], but were opposed by those “pursuing opportunism” [便宜論].<sup>51</sup> Nakano sympathized with Saigō and his followers even after they resorted to violence or “military action” [武断実行] to achieve their ends. The leaders of the samurai uprisings of the early years of Meiji - Etō Shimpei, Maebara Issei and Saigō Takamori - were, according to Nakano, carrying in themselves “the spirit of the Restoration” when they “attacked the walls set up by the *hambatsu*.”<sup>52</sup> Nakano believed this made them progressives, rather than reactionaries, and accordingly referred to the Satsuma Rebellion or Seinan War as the “Seinan Revolution” [西南革命] and dubbed Saigō’s followers the “pure revolutionary party” [純然たる革命党].<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Nakano used the phrase “emergence of the masses” [万民の登場]. Instead of this literal translation, I have used the more elegant translation provided by Tetsuo Najita, “Nakano Seigō and the Spirit of the Meiji Restoration in Twentieth-Century Japan”, p. 381.

<sup>50</sup> Nakano Seigō, “On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era”, p. 495.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 496.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 497.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 47 – 48.

The defeat of Saigō's uprising marked the end of attempts to realize the spirit of the Restoration by military means. The promise contained in the Charter Oath, however - initially made because the government needed the people's support - had inspired many citizens to join the Meiji Freedom and Popular Rights Movement in the belief that "the spirit of the Restoration should be revived by peaceful means"<sup>54</sup>. In forcing the Meiji government to establish a Diet, Nakano believed this group scored an important victory. But "since the opening of the Diet," Nakano continued, "I am afraid the exercise of the restoration's spirit has become extremely rare."<sup>55</sup> This mistake, which coincided with a failure to establish party government, arose because Japan's leaders had too often followed "policies of compromise [妥協方針] that ushered in the defeat of the people's party and helped maintain the *hambatsu*'s dominant position."<sup>56</sup>

The conclusion Nakano drew from his interpretation of the Meiji period's political history was that the spirit of the Restoration - that is, the promise contained in the Charter Oath - had never been fulfilled and accordingly still awaited realization. Nakano believed such realization could be achieved through a "Taishō Restoration"<sup>57</sup> that would not be brought about by political insiders such as Saionji, Yamagata or Ōkuma, because "they have already accumulated power and wealth and a Taishō Restoration would rob them of their private power and wealth. Therefore, they will never rise up."<sup>58</sup> Neither did Nakano place his hopes in the political parties, even

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 497.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 498.

<sup>56</sup> Only once had the parties realized the "folly of compromising," formed a coalition and taken an uncompromising stance to bring down "the fortress of the *hambatsu*," namely in 1898 when Itagaki Taisuke's Jiyūtō and Ōkuma Shigenobu's Shimpotō formed the Kenseitō, but even this attempt had been frustrated due to "the lack of resolution and want of sincerity among some members of the people's parties." Nakano Seigō, "On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era", p. 499 – 500.

<sup>57</sup> Nakano wrote: "... at the beginning of Taishō we have to add another great restoration [一大修復]. ... a Taishō Restoration [大正維新]..." Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

warning his readers “against the idea of trying to wash off the poisonous blood of the *hambatsu* by using the soiled blood of the parties.”<sup>59</sup> In his view, the next restoration would be brought about by “a young, wise, courageous, eloquent, and strong person, a *rōnin* from among the humble commoners.”<sup>60</sup> Nakano placed his hope in the Taishō Crisis, which was unfolding as he wrote these articles. He advised the activists to learn from Saigō’s “absolute determination” [絶対不同]<sup>61</sup> and to take an uncompromising stance in challenging the *hambatsu*.

### **Movement to Protect the Constitution**

Nakano was still in the middle of writing his history on the Meiji Popular Rights Movement when in November 1912 the army, frustrated in their desire to add two new divisions, withdrew the Army Minister and refused to supply a successor, thus forcing the Saionji cabinet to resign. Seen by many intellectuals and party politicians as a complete disregard for “constitutional government,” the army’s move triggered the so-called Taishō Political Crisis. The parties, which in the past had been divided and easily played by the *hambatsu*, united against the new government formed by Katsura in December 1912. This coalition received broad-based support outside the Diet from business leaders, intellectuals and activists, held rallies and demonstrations, and formed what was soon called the Movement to Protect the Constitution. Katsura’s attempts to overcome the parties’ opposition by founding a new party, and by having the Emperor issue a rescript demanding cooperation with his government, led to riots, which erupted during the following days amid shouts of “Protect the Constitution” and “Bring down the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 501.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 497.

*hambatsu*.”<sup>62</sup> Facing determined opposition within the Diet and the “threat of revolutionary riots”<sup>63</sup> outside it, Katsura finally resigned. His successor, Yamamoto Gombei (Gonnohyōe), was able to win the support of the largest political party, Seiyūkai, led by Hara Kei, thus ending the inter-party cooperation. For compromising with Yamamoto, Hara Kei was criticized severely by many of the movement’s leaders, including Ozaki Yukio – who, with 26 members, left the Seiyūkai in protest and formed the Seiyūkai-Club.

Because of its widespread popular support, the Movement to Protect the Constitution seemed to Nakano an opportunity to bring about the sort of Taishō restoration he had envisioned in his history of the Meiji Popular Rights Movement. Nakano threw all the political weight he had gained as a journalist behind the movement, writing articles and commentaries intended to fan the popular passion for constitutional government. Among the many articles Nakano wrote during those turbulent days, the best-known are a series of editorials in the form of open letters addressed to political figures and parties on both sides of the divide.<sup>64</sup>

The editorials contained some familiar themes. As he had done in the past, Nakano attacked the *hambatsu* and made the attack highly personal. He focused his ire on Katsura, because according to Nakano all the other *genrō* were politically dead and “not one of them merits that I raise my voice demanding their destruction. ... It is because of you [Katsura] that the people loudly demand the destruction of the *batsuzoku*. In that sense, the popular movement

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<sup>62</sup> See Andrew Gordon, “A Modern History of Japan” (New York, 2003) p. 130-132.

<sup>63</sup> The fear that the situation in the streets might become uncontrollable was shared by Hara Kei who confided in his diary that “if [Katsura ] still refused to resign, I think practically a revolutionary riot will occur.” Hara quoted in Andrew Gordon, “A Modern History of Japan”, (New York, 2003), p. 130.

<sup>64</sup> Altogether Nakano wrote nine letters, which were subsequently republished in Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin Hachi-Jū – Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight” [七擒八縦], (Tokyo, May 1913).

demanding the protection of the constitution and the destruction of the *hambatsu* is entirely directed against you.”<sup>65</sup>

Nakano also resuscitated his critique of the politics of compromise, violently deriding Hara for joining the Yamamoto cabinet - a betrayal that lowered Hara to Katsura’s level in Nakano’s eyes:

“The people are attacking the collusion between Katsura and yourself, Hara, two monsters that are the focus of their grudge, and they will not stop until the likes of you are swept away. The natural destination of our political world is the moment when you, Hara, will die an agonizing death. ... We the constitutional people will be able to welcome the spring of constitutional government only after you have been overthrown. Until we see you die in agony we must not lower the spears aimed against you.”<sup>66</sup>

Nakano also continued his campaign of insults, calling Yamamoto a “money-loving ... Jew,”<sup>67</sup> and Hara “the vermin inside the body of a lion” [i.e. an enemy from within] who “once he saw profit was ready to change his position faster than lightning.”<sup>68</sup> As usual, Nakano ignored warnings from his friends that insulting powerful politicians was not advisable for someone with political ambitions.<sup>69</sup>

Nakano’s appraisal of Inukai and Ozaki, already positive before the crisis, now came close to adoration. In the editorial addressed to Inukai, Nakano wrote “it was you who achieved most of the success. It was you who actually overthrew Katsura, overthrew Saionji and pushed all the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 228-29. In another piece entitled “Taking Pity on Yamamoto Gombei” [山本権兵衛大臣を憐れむ] in *Chūō Kōron* April, 1913, Nakano repeated and expanded his accusations against Yamamoto, for being a “slave to money and fattening his own belly on steel orders for ships and arms procurements” not realizing that these accusations would soon shown to be true when the Siemens scandal revealed in March 1914 that high-ranking officers of the Navy had in fact received kickbacks on a large scale.

<sup>68</sup> Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin Hachi-Jū – Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight”, p. 226.

<sup>69</sup> This time the warning came from Nakano’s boss at the *Asahi* Ikebe Sanzan, who cautioned Nakano no to “seek short-lived satisfaction in offense and thus make enemies with your sharp tongue.” Ikebe quoted in Inomata, p. 85.



ugly remnants of Hara Kei's compromise era out of politics."<sup>70</sup> The editorial addressed to Ozaki is no less laudatory, praising him for remaining true to his convictions and breaking with the Seiyūkai after Hara had led it to join the Yamamoto cabinet:

“Though you work in the slippery world of politics, you do not get dirty, but stand tall as pristine lotus flower. No matter how many years pass, you remain a virgin in politics. ... When we celebrate the flowering of the constitution, the virgin of the political world should take the main seat [at the table]. The glorious and courageous general who destroyed the *hambatsu* should be mentioned first when the rewards for this achievement are discussed. My only hope is that when the spring of our constitution comes sometime in the future, I have the honor of enjoying it with you.”<sup>71</sup>

The hot-blooded zeal with which Nakano delved into his work during the Movement to Protect the Constitution impressed those around him as well as himself. Afterward, Nakano wrote that “from the very beginning of that movement, I have left the position of commentator and instead become the last among the activists. ... I was unable to stop the struggle at any point.”<sup>72</sup> And the effort paid off: Once again, Nakano's article series was a great success with the *Asahi's* readership and well-received by critics.<sup>73</sup> Once again, it was subsequently republished as a book.

### **Problems at the Tokyo Asahi**

Paradoxically, Nakano's journalistic success did not strengthen his standing within the *Asahi News* but rather coincided with his increasing isolation. Nakano's ostracism, however,

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<sup>70</sup> Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin, Hachi-Jū– Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight”, p. 139.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 164-65.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 261-62.

<sup>73</sup> The June, 1913 issue of *Japan and the Japanese* read: “While we all despair at the present situation, the heart of the author seems to be filled with grievances. Tackling the harsh realities with his pen, his sharp words are to the point. Among the recent authors, this is a more enjoyable one.” While in the July 1913 issue of *Chūō Kōron* one could read: “One of the remarkable men of future political change is without doubt Nakano Seigō. Even in the present age, where the literary arts are well developed and the readers do not complain about the lack of good essayists, we do have great expectations for this author [i.e. Nakano Seigō].” Both quoted in Inomata, p. 88.

resulted less from his political views than from his personal behavior. Factional strife within the *Asahi* existed throughout Nakano's tenure, pitting Nakano's mentor Yugeta against Ikebe and his successor Matsuyama, but both editors were intelligent enough to understand that neither Nakano's character nor his political views diminished his quality as a writer.

Inability to share his passion is part of the explanation for Nakano's increasing isolation. The more enthusiastically Nakano immersed himself in supporting the Movement to Protect the Constitution in his articles and attacking its opponents, the less he tolerated anyone around him (except Ogata), and the more his colleagues withdrew from the editorial office - leaving the bulk of the work to Nakano. On one occasion, Nakano was left alone with Ogata to write the following day's entire political section. Coverage of the movement had become a one-man show and the *Asahi* staff referred jokingly to the Movement to Protect the Constitution as "Nakano's Movement to Protect the Constitution."<sup>74</sup>

More important, however, was Nakano's feeling of superiority, which - boosted by his professional success - turned into arrogance and perhaps even contempt for his colleagues, a development that cost him any remaining sympathy among them. Ogata later recalled:

"Soon after entering the newspaper, I felt that Nakano moved somewhere above his colleagues. Somehow, he kept apart from the others and occupied a special place above the rest. ... Surely, Nakano was an excellent journalist, but it was only natural that once he started running off all by himself, the slower ones left behind would group together in order to defend their position."<sup>75</sup>

Though Nakano was aware that his position within the paper was becoming fragile, he failed to grasp his contribution to his decline. To him "the accusation voiced by mediocres [俗人] has its origin in the fact that from early on I have acted within the company as if it were my

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<sup>74</sup> Ogata, p. 36.

<sup>75</sup> Ogata, p. 35.

own.”<sup>76</sup> That labeling - and probably also treating - his colleagues as “mediocres” could be part of the problem never seems to have occurred to Nakano. While his journalistic successes could have earned him his colleagues’ admiration, they made him more and more conceited and thus earned him their envy instead. According to Nishimura Tenshū,<sup>77</sup> one of his colleagues at the *Asahi*, Nakano’s position within the paper would continue to deteriorate until what had been simple isolation became an outright “Nakano boycott.”<sup>78</sup>

Nakano’s divisive presence in Tokyo was likely the main reason he was offered a job in the summer of 1913 as the paper’s correspondent in Seoul, Korea. The tacit understanding that after Nakano completed his tour in Korea the *Asahi* would send him to study in Europe likely spurred Nakano to accept the post. Before leaving, however, he attended to the important business of getting married.

### **Marriage with Daughter of Miyake Setsurei**

The woman that Nakano chose to become his wife was Miyake Tamiko, the first-born daughter of Miyake Setsurei and his wife Kaho.<sup>79</sup> Though Nakano must have visited the Miyakes at least on some occasions, some accounts suggest he had never met their daughter. He was nevertheless confident that “the daughter must be the right choice” simply because “both parents are great personalities.”<sup>80</sup> When Nakano put out his feelers, employing the offices of Inukai’s

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<sup>76</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata p. 94.

<sup>77</sup> Nishimura Tenshū [西村天四]: (1865 - 1924) Journalist and critic.

<sup>78</sup> Nishimura Tenshū quoted in Inomata, p. 93.

<sup>79</sup> Miyake Kaho [三宅花圃] (1868 - 1943) poet and novelist.

<sup>80</sup> This anecdote is recalled by the matchmaker, Kojima Kazuo. Kojima quoted in Mitamura, Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刀したか], (Tokyo, 1953) p. 128.

right-hand man, Kojima Kazuo,<sup>81</sup> the reaction was initially lukewarm. Miyake Setsurei worried that someone as impetuous, impulsive and impatient as Nakano might spend all his vitality and die an early death, while his wife, Kaho, wondered whether a graduate from Waseda University was good enough for her daughter.<sup>82</sup> Unlike her parents, Nakano's future wife, Tamiko, seems to have been quite happy with the prospect of marrying Nakano.<sup>83</sup> In the end Kojima, together with Tōyama - who acted as official matchmaker - was able to secure the parents' consent and the young couple married on July 28, 1913. Less than a month later, they left Tokyo for Seoul, Korea.

### **Correspondent in Seoul**

Nakano and his wife arrived in Seoul during the tenure of Governor General Terauchi, a time Korean historians dub a "dark period" because of the oppressive rigor of Terauchi's rule.<sup>84</sup> An army general, Terauchi had been sent to govern Korea after the relatively moderate approach of his predecessor, Itō Hirobumi, had led to a wave of protests ending in open rebellion and Itō's assassination. Terauchi approached the task of pacifying Korea by relying primarily on the *kempeitai*, or military police, with the aim of controlling all aspects of public life.

Terauchi was severely criticized even within Japan for his iron-fisted approach to government. The two *Asahi News* correspondents who preceded Nakano had clashed frequently

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<sup>81</sup> Kojima Kazuo [古島一雄] (1865 – 1952) journalist and politician, had known Miyake since at least 1888 when he started to contributing frequently to the former's magazine.

<sup>82</sup> For Miyake Kaho's reaction see Inomata p. 97 as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 129 According to some accounts, it was Nakano who worried that his future wife could die an early death. Nagao writes: "When they married, she was young and talented and it was said that talented people would not live a long life. Seigō asked her to follow his example and become a bit stupid." Nagao Ryō [長尾遼], "Moving Peoples' Souls" [留魂人を動かす], (Tokyo, 1998) p. 293.

<sup>83</sup> See Inomata p. 97.

<sup>84</sup> See Michael E. Robinson, "Colonial Publication Policy and the Korean Nationalist Movement" in "The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945", ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 323.

with the colonial authorities. On four occasions, censors had gone so far as to prohibit the sale of the *Asahi News* in Korea; once, an *Asahi* correspondent had even been threatened with deportation.<sup>85</sup> By sending Nakano, their most sharp-tongued, outspoken and aggressive writer, to Seoul, the *Asahi* made clear that it had no intention of turning down its criticism. Yet, if his superiors at the *Asahi* had hoped that Nakano would pick up the fight against the colonial government where previous correspondents had left off, they were initially disappointed, for Nakano had different intentions. Shortly after his arrival in Korea, Nakano explained in a letter to Kojima Kazuo:

“Having arrived on the spot ... rather than talking to God-knows-whom, nothing is as telling as taking a direct look by yourself. If you do that you quickly become aware of your own ignorance, [and this ignorance] I greatly deplore. I decided to pursue my studies and my investigations at the same time and think that for the time being I will not write great arguments but increase my knowledge before my term is up.”<sup>86</sup>

As noble as Nakano’s intention to study the situation before condemning it may sound, two things must be borne in mind. First, Nakano’s inability to communicate in Korean would ensure his understanding of the situation was always distorted by a Japanese perspective – or, as his son Yasuo points out, Nakano never saw Korea through Korean eyes.<sup>87</sup> Second, one should not take the above to mean that Nakano had not yet passed his judgment on the colonial administration, for as he wrote in the same letter, he felt “great discomfort at the deep-rooted evil perpetuated in colonial and diplomatic policies by bureaucratic governors lacking knowledge and experience.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> For example, the issues of *Asahi News*’ April 3 and 5, 1911 had been taken out of circulation because they contained articles by Okano Yōnosuke [岡野養之助], then correspondent to Seoul, which were critical of Terauchi regime in Korea. See Inomata, p. 98 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 130.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from Nakano Seigō to Kojima Kazuo, dated September 6, 1913 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 131.

<sup>87</sup> Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 133.

<sup>88</sup> Letter from Nakano Seigō to Kojima Kazuo, dated September 6, 1913 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1,

If Nakano chose to study the situation before passing his verdict, then it was only to gather more evidence against Terauchi, not really to test his forgone conclusion.

Nakano started his investigation of Korea by traveling within and beyond the colony. In September, he visited Daegu province in southern Korea, followed by a second trip to Manchuria in October-November.<sup>89</sup> In keeping with his resolve to withhold public judgment, Nakano's reports from his voyages were mostly descriptive, his criticism was mild and directed mainly against Tokyo, and only seldom did he venture to address the colonial administrators.<sup>90</sup>

Nakano finally resolved to formulate his criticism of Terauchi's government sometime in late 1913 or early 1914. According to Nakano, he "poured his own hot blood" [自分が熱血をそそいだ文章]<sup>91</sup> into writing his critique of Terauchi, which was published as a series beginning April 16, 1914.<sup>92</sup>

Starting off by stating that he "had a belly full of grievances" and could "no longer watch silently,"<sup>93</sup> Nakano's Korean series was somewhat more balanced than his past works in that it did not aim at Terauchi's personal faults but rather at the faults of his policies, and in that Nakano also mentioned a number of positive aspects. Nakano noted, for instance, that Governor General

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p. 131.

<sup>89</sup> The tour to Daegu province is described in "Korea's Provinces Seen at a Glance" [一瞥せる朝鮮の地方] while Nakano's account of his trip to Manchuria can be found in "Manchurian Travel Journal" [満州遊歴雑録]. Both are reproduced in Nakano Seigō, "Manchuria and Korea as I saw them" [我が観たる満鮮], (Tokyo, 1915), p. 381-83 and p. 151-303 respectively.

<sup>90</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "Manchurian Travel Journal" [満州遊歴雑録] in "Manchuria and Korea as I saw them" [我が観たる満鮮], (Tokyo, 1915), p. 141, 163 and following, p. 290 and following.

<sup>91</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Hold on, Father" [シッカリシロ・チチ], in "Expressions of the Soul" [魂を吐く], (Tokyo, May, 1938), p. 313.

<sup>92</sup> As so often before, the articles were subsequently published in a book and it is from there that most of the quotes are taken. Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies" [総督政治論] in "Manchuria and Korea as I saw them" [我が観たる満鮮], (Tokyo, 1915), p. 1 – 66.

<sup>93</sup> Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies", p. 4.

Terauchi's "policies have no doubt made a step toward increasing the welfare of the common people."<sup>94</sup>

Then, however, Nakano recalled that whenever he talked to lower colonial administration officials, he "was surprised to find out that ... all were full of grievances." Japanese businessmen residing in Korea likewise "did not grow tired of talking critically about the governor's policies and were not afraid to say in public that Korea's development could not proceed until after the governor's dismissal." Nakano drew from this the preliminary conclusion that the "well-intentioned" governor's "policies were bad" [善意の悪政] and warned that "as long as the serious and passionate governor does not abandon his mistaken beliefs, I fear that against his expectations he will only produce evil results."<sup>95</sup> As the uprisings of March 1919 would show, Nakano was right in his prediction.

Nakano believed the fundamental problem with Terauchi's administration lay in his trust in the "omnipotence of bureaucracy" [官権万能主義],<sup>96</sup> which led him to rely exclusively on the controlling power of the military police under his command instead of allowing some degree of self-rule. The main problem with this approach, in Nakano's mind, was that the military police had neither the manpower nor the expertise to control all of Korean society:

"On top of the tasks that a normal police would fulfill, they also have to control society's public morals, supervise the press, research the character of individuals, check the financial status of entrepreneurs, and supervise the conduct of provincial officials. How can a *kempeitai* officer with his simple knowledge accomplish all this?"<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies", p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies", p. 5-6.

<sup>96</sup> Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies", p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies", p. 51-52.

In order to protect the public peace in the days directly following Korea's annexation, this heavy-handed approach may have been necessary, but by the time Nakano had arrived in Korea (three years after the annexation), he found its limits were apparent.

According to Nakano, the fundamental mistake of Governor General Terauchi's administration was nowhere better exemplified than in his handling of the Korean press. In his effort to control Korean resistance to Japanese rule, Terauchi tried to "unify the press" [言論機関の統一]<sup>98</sup> and to this end enlisted the help of Tokutomi Sohō, who later explained that unification meant "the exact opposite of freedom of speech."<sup>99</sup> More specifically, it meant limiting the number of newspapers to one per region, and eliminating in the process all those that were critical of Japanese rule.<sup>100</sup> Tokutomi's and Terauchi's policies silenced criticism successfully, as Nakano realized soon after his arrival. Writing to his boss, Yugeta, in Tokyo, Nakano remarked: "Even though there are many newspapers, my guess is that there is not one [in Korea] that can criticize the Resident-General's office."<sup>101</sup>

Nakano was quick to point out, however, that silencing the administration's critics came with a price. Control of the press meant that the free flow of information and opinions was obstructed and this made for a "society in darkness." Nakano wrote that ruling such a society was like driving a horse carriage at full speed during a dark night on a dangerous road and demanded

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<sup>98</sup> See Michael E. Robinson, "Colonial Publication Policy and the Korean Nationalist Movement" in "The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945", ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, (Princeton, 1984), p. 312.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Inomata, p. 99. Quote taken from Tokutomi Sohō [徳富蘇峰], "Autobiography of Tokutomi" [徳富自伝], (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1997).

<sup>100</sup> For a more detailed description of Tokutomi's role in Korea see John D. Pierson, "Tokutomi Sohō, 1863 – 1957 – A Journalist for Modern Japan", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 298-300.

<sup>101</sup> Nakano Seigō in a letter to Yugeta, quoted in Inomata p. 98.



“freedom of the speech and press” [言論報道の自由]<sup>102</sup> in Korea. Extending the metaphor, Nakano asked the Governor General to “turn the street lantern on.”<sup>103</sup>

To correct the *kempeitai* system’s overarching flaws, Nakano advocated for a fundamental shift in Japan’s colonial policy, from bureaucracy [官治主義] toward self-rule [自治主義], from supervision [監督主義] toward guidance [指導主義], and from interventionism [干涉主義] toward liberalism [自由主義]. Whether General Terauchi read Nakano’s criticism remains unknown, but the General certainly did not heed Nakano’s advice. Only after the uprisings of March 1919 revealed the bankruptcy of Terauchi’s policies did Japanese colonial rule in Korea take a more liberal tone under the new governor Saitō Makoto.

Though Tokutomi Sohō and Nakano again found themselves in opposing camps (they had already clashed two years earlier over how to deal with China’s revolution), when Nakano met Sohō and his brother Roka<sup>104</sup> in person, they immediately took a liking to each other and eventually became friends. Recalling his first impression, Tokutomi later wrote:

“At the time, Nakano’s writing was wild and unrestrained, but from the beginning I liked him for his radiant talents, his lively spirit and his forward aggressiveness. I could not help but hope for his future. ... Nakano had the character of the *shishi* [man of purpose] of the Restoration. He was neither an aristocrat nor a commoner, but a *shishi* ... in the sense that anyone with a heart would feel it, would love him, would want to become familiar with him, and would want to respect him.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The Governor General’s Policies”, p. 13 and following.

<sup>103</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The Governor General’s Policies”, p. 7-8.

<sup>104</sup> Tokutomi Roka [徳富蘆花] (1868 - 1927) novelist. Roka recalled his first meeting with Nakano in his “The Shadow of Death” [死の陰], (Tokyo, Ōe Shobō [大江書房], 1917), p. 476.

<sup>105</sup> Tokutomi Sohō [徳富蘇峰], “The Character of Men of Purpose of the Restoration” [維新志士の風格], in “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], eds. Seigō-Society [正剛会], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954) p. 44.

With time their friendship became closer and, after Nakano's death, Sohō wrote Nakano's epitaph.

As Nakano's stay in Korea drew to a close, he had no reason to be dissatisfied. He was supporting two households, one in Tokyo and his own in Seoul, had become the proud father of a healthy boy (Katsuaki [克明], born in the spring of 1914, was the first of four sons), and continued to be successful professionally. Almost as a matter of course, the articles he had written in the course of the year were republished as a book in 1915.<sup>106</sup> Better still was the prospect of spending the next one to two years traveling and studying in Europe.

### **On to Europe**

For anyone aiming to become a credible, authoritative statesman, knowledge of Europe - then the global center of power and culture - was indispensable. Traveling West and gaining exposure to European ways was thus the next logical step for Nakano in his quest to enter politics. Even as he prepared for his return to Japan, Nakano sent letters to his mentors - Kojima, Inukai, Yugeta, etc.- announcing his intention and sounding out possible ways to finance the voyage.<sup>107</sup> Following Nakano's instructions, Kojima approached Yasukawa Kei'ichirō,<sup>108</sup> a Fukuoka coal baron and father of Nakano's Shūyūkan classmate and friend, Yasukawa Daigorō, asking for Yen

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<sup>106</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Manchuria and Korea as I saw them" [我が観たる満鮮], (Tokyo, 1915). The monograph was originally published by Miyake Setsurei's Seikyō-sha [政教社]. Incidentally, the book was published a second time as part of a series of monographs on Japanese views of China in 1999. See Kojima Shinji [小島晋治] ed., "Accounts of China during the Taisho period: Part 1: Manchuria and Korea as I saw them, by Nakano Seigō" [大正中国見聞録集成第1巻 ー我が観たる満鮮・中野正剛著], (Tokyo, Yumani Shobo [ゆまに書房], 1999).

<sup>107</sup> For example in a letter to Kojima reproduced in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 152.

<sup>108</sup> Yasukawa Kei'ichirō [安川敬一郎] (1849 – 1934) Fukuoka business man, coal baron, founder of Yasukawa Zaibatsu and long-standing financial backer of Nakano.

5,000 – a sum Nakano had calculated would pay for two years of study in Europe.<sup>109</sup> Kojima secured the funds in less than a month.

Even with funding for the trip secure, Nakano still hesitated to quit his job, trying instead to obtain a leave of absence from the *Asahi* (including the option to return to his former position after he came back from Europe). Obtaining this leave of absence proved difficult, for while there had been a tacit understanding between the *Asahi* management and Nakano that after having served as a Korean correspondent he could go to Europe, no one admitted remembering it. Nakano had no friends at the paper and Yugeta, his one remaining ally, wanted Nakano to return to Japan, because he believed Nakano could strengthen his own standing within the company. In the end (and the end did not come until sometime in February 1915!), Nakano was nevertheless able to secure not only a leave of absence but also a monthly stipend from the *Asahi*, which meant that he now had more money at his disposal than he actually needed. Having spent the first months of 1915 preparing for his voyage and stay in England, Nakano left Tokyo, this time without his wife and son, on March 12.

### **The Sea Voyage to England**

Nakano kept a diary during his 50-day sea voyage to England, in which he recorded in great detail the day-to-day vicissitudes of sea life. He kept track of, among other things, the weather, the sea's changing colors, the points he won and lost in games played on deck (even as an adult, Nakano continued to be a bad loser), the food served, the books he read (works by Lao

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<sup>109</sup> To put the sum in perspective, consider that by 1916 the starting salary of a university graduate was 45 Yen, assuming that Nakano was to stay away for two years, 5,000 Yen equaled a monthly stipend of over 200 Yen (more than four times the starting salary of a university graduate!). Even if we consider that he had to maintain his entire family as well as himself abroad this seems generous. For wages and prices see Iwasaki Jirō [岩崎爾郎], "Price Conditions over 100 Years" [物価の世相 100年], (Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun-sha, 1982) p. 286-300.

Tsu and Max O'Rell's "John Bull and his Island"<sup>110</sup>), and even the dreams he had at night. He also described short stays on land (Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Suez, etc.) where the ship anchored to load coal. Despite the fact that the world had been at war for over six months as Nakano sailed, a brief mention of Allied warships in the Suez Canal and the threat of German U-Boat attacks between Gibraltar and England were his only references to WW1.

Below the surface, however, the account of the voyage, which was later published under the title "Mountains and Rivers of a Perished Nations,"<sup>111</sup> is all about the colonized and semi-colonized "perished nations" Nakano saw along the way, which left a profound and long-lasting impression on him.<sup>112</sup>

"Between our departure from Kobe until our arrival in Marseilles, all the countries we have visited [i.e., where we have anchored] were either perished or half perished [i.e., colonies or semi-colonies]. Moreover, the people of all those perished countries all belong to the intellectual, emotional and cultural tradition of the colored races, while their masters, who have conquered and are now exploiting them, all belong to the white races."<sup>113</sup>

Nakano believed this sort of exploitation could persist for only two reasons: first, hypocritical racism on the side of the Western Powers who "shout humanity ... but [who], if they really wanted to realize their lofty words ... would not permit any injustices based on race,"<sup>114</sup> and second, innocent weakness on the side of Asian people whose "only sin lies in the fact that

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<sup>110</sup> Max O'Rell was the pseudonym of the French born Léon Paul Blouet (1848-1903). His humorously critical book on England was widely popular.

<sup>111</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Mountains and Rivers of Perished Nations" [亡国の山河], in "Global Policy and Far Eastern Policy" [世界政策と極東政策], (Tokyo, February, 1917) p. 326-433.

<sup>112</sup> His later writings and speeches on the question of Western colonialism in Asia Nakano would often recall the humiliation and indignation felt during this voyage. See for example, Nakano Seigō, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo, October 1933), p. 130.

<sup>113</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Mountains and Rivers of Perished Nations" p. 326.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

they are weak.”<sup>115</sup> While Nakano felt like “cursing the racist prejudice”<sup>116</sup> of the West, he “could not suppress secret tears of sympathy” for his fellow Asians who “share[d] our customs and beliefs [and] were unable to walk on this earth in freedom.”<sup>117</sup> The only glimpses of hope Nakano saw came during moments “when these, our cursed, colored relatives rise yearning for leadership from our side.” Nakano wondered: “To whom can they appeal today? Only to that youthful empire to the East [i.e. Japan]. ... If you stop to talk to the more ambitious amongst them, you will realize that they look up to us, want to learn from us and then follow our lead.”<sup>118</sup>

Nakano concluded that “in order to create a new paradise in the economic sphere and to do away with the oppression of other races, we have to bring the races of the East and the West to the same level. That mission rests on our shoulders.”<sup>119</sup> This view of Japan’s mission in the world formed the foundation from which Nakano criticized the policy of Japanese Foreign Minister Katō Taka’aki,<sup>120</sup> especially the decision to participate in WW1 on the side of the Allies, and the notorious 21 Demands presented to China in early 1915.

Nakano believed that Japan’s declaration of war against Germany had been precipitous. Instead of joining the war on the side of England, almost against England’s will, Katō should have waited for England to ask for support. Then, Nakano believed, Kato could not only have extracted much more favorable conditions for Japan, but could also have earned England’s gratitude and support in subsequent negotiations. Second, presenting China with the notorious 21 Demands and triggering widespread anti-Japanese feelings went against what Nakano considered

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 397.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 326-433.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p. 396.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 397-98.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 375.

<sup>120</sup> Katō Taka’aki (Kōmei) [加藤高明] (1860 - 1926) diplomat, politician, and later Prime Minister.

to be Japan's mission in Asia, namely liberating Asia from colonialism. After arriving in England, Nakano commented in a letter home: "When I look at Japanese diplomacy from the center of the world's stage, I find it pathetic and tears run down my cheeks."<sup>121</sup>

Nakano's suggested alternatives fluctuated between two poles. On the moderate end, he argued it would have served Japan's and Asia's interests much better if Katō had maintained a neutral position in the war in Europe and an anti-imperialist stance in China. In his more extreme moments, Nakano suggested Japan should have joined the war on Germany's side, rather than on England's, thus opening the door for the disintegration of European empires in Asia. When Nakano heard that Japan had sent troops to suppress a mutiny among Indian forces about to be shipped to the European theatre to fight on England's behalf, his indignation knew no bounds. "How long," he wondered, "can Japan continue to suppress the colored people on behalf of the white? When I think about this, I can feel my hot blood rising through my entire body."<sup>122</sup>

Nakano did not tire of airing his views upon arriving in England in early May 1915, and he continued doing so, with remarkable passion and vehemence, long after his return to Japan.<sup>123</sup> Sugimori Kōjirō,<sup>124</sup> then studying in London, later recalled how one day he arrived at the Japanese club and was thrown into a heated debate that had pitted all the Japanese expatriates defending Japan's foreign policy against one single man, who later introduced himself as Nakano Seigō. Out of pity that day Sugimori showed solidarity with Nakano, laying thus the foundation of their future friendship.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Nakano Seigō in a letter to his family dated August 13, 1915 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 194.

<sup>122</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 178-79.

<sup>123</sup> Nakano eventually also confronted Prime Minister, Ōkuma Shigenobu, with his criticism who, however, was little impressed by it. The conversation is recorded in Nakano Seigō, "Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea", p. 149.

<sup>124</sup> Sugimori Kōjirō [杉森孝次郎] (1881 – 1968) scholar and social scientist.

<sup>125</sup> The entire anecdote is recalled by Sugimori in Sugimori Kōjirō [杉森孝次郎], "An intellectual" [知性

Apart from politics – which, during Nakano’s stay, meant mainly the war<sup>126</sup> – Nakano focused his attention on studying the English language. To this end, he read avidly – according to his own (perhaps somewhat exaggerated) account, five to six newspapers a day, as well as a number of books – and after about one month started to make his first timid conversations. With Sugimori’s encouragement, he began socializing,<sup>127</sup> meeting among others university professors who recommend readings, mostly social, economic and political works.<sup>128</sup> Nakano’s understanding of written English texts improved considerably as a result.<sup>129</sup>

Many years later, Nakano described his time in England as an electrifying period during which he absorbed vast amounts of literature and built his language skills.<sup>130</sup> At least initially, he

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の人], in “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], eds. Seigō-kai [正剛会], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954), p.120-21.

<sup>126</sup> Being in England, at a far distance from the front, Nakano experienced no fighting except for a Zeppelin air raid during which a nearby church was destroyed. This, and the Doolittle raid of 1942 were the only two first-hand experiences of warfare in Nakano’s entire life.

<sup>127</sup> See Nakano’s letter to his family dated July 2, 1915 in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 190.

<sup>128</sup> According to Sugimori, Nakano read among others Aristotle’s “On Politics” and the English translation of Friedrich List’s “Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie” and a number of books on Germany based on which he tried to compare England’s and Germany’s military power in order to predict the outcome of the war.

<sup>129</sup> All biographers agree that Nakano could read English well. Whether he was able to express himself orally or on paper is a different question. A telegram that he sent to Tōyama in 1919 reporting from the Peace Conference at Paris may serve as a gauge, because Nakano provided us with the original English text, as well as a Japanese translation of what he supposedly meant to say. He meant to say: “The conference has taken an embarrassing turn on Thursday. The United States have created an atmosphere exerting pressure under which unfortunately the main pillars of our country a giving way and starting to crumble. Faced with this danger, strong public opinion in our fatherland has to be aroused.” [木曜日の会議は恥づべき形勢を演出しが如し。米国の手にて捲き起されし雰囲氣的圧迫の下、我国の標柱は不幸にも支えかねて碎けんとす。此危険に際し最も強硬なる祖国の世論を喚起するを要す]. What Nakano actually wrote was: “Thursday’s conference understood ignominious. Our pillars crumbling unfortunately under heavy atmospheric pressure at America’s initiative, especially on south islands. Strongest vernacular voice should be raised at this juncture.” See Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction” [世界改造の巷より], (Tokyo: Tōhōjirion-sha, April 1919), p. 29.

<sup>130</sup> See for example Nakano’s recollection in “Special Edition on Totalitarian Policy: The Leading Principle of Japanese Diplomacy” [全体主義政策特集：日本外交の指導原理], in *Tōtairiku*, November 1938, p. 95-118.

was driven by the realization that “the next two years will make the most significant contribution to my future career.”<sup>131</sup>

While Nakano does not seem to have lost this drive, it was eventually eclipsed by another theme that appeared repeatedly in his letters home, namely his increasing dislike for England and the English. Already in his very first letter from England, written immediately after his arrival, Nakano wrote “Little by little, I come to despise the English,”<sup>132</sup> and with the passing of time this dislike only grew stronger. Three months after his arrival in England, his dislike had intensified so much that he started considering cutting his stay short:

“The more I study the English, the more I come to the conclusion that they are no good. .... The politicians, the scholars, the students, none of them are any good. This country rots away while priding itself on richness and honor. ... There is nothing to learn from the English. If it goes on like this, two years will be long.”<sup>133</sup>

Hoping for a change, Nakano moved from London to Oxford, which he liked somewhat better. His view of the English, however, did not change fundamentally. As far as we know, Nakano made no English friends, not even a superficial acquaintance with whom he would keep in touch through correspondence after his return.

It is not clear what sort of event caused or triggered Nakano’s dislike. Nakano’s letters do not mention any nasty experience or encounter that could explain his aversion and Sugimori later recalled that whenever he introduced Nakano to someone, they were received in a friendly way.<sup>134</sup> The fact that Nakano had come to despise the English as soon as he had gotten off his ship

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<sup>131</sup> Nakano in a letter to his family dated May 28, 1915, reproduced in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 189.

<sup>132</sup> Nakano in a letter to his family dated May 5, 1915, reproduced in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 188.

<sup>133</sup> Nakano in a letter to his family dated August 13, 1915, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 194-5.

<sup>134</sup> See Sugimori Kōjirō, in *Gakan*, October 1944.



suggests that prejudice may be part of the explanation. Whatever the reasons, England did not win his heart.

After letting his dislike for the British percolate for seven months, in the winter of 1915-6, Nakano decided to cut his stay short and return home. Instead of one or two years, as originally planned, Nakano spent only seven months in England. After traveling briefly to France, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain, he returned to Japan via the United States, completing the once-around-the-world trip in a bit more than a year.

Nakano's dislike for England persisted. Six months after leaving Europe (while traveling west through the United States), Nakano repeated that "the English are cunning ... they lack sincerity and spirit; hypocritical talk is their second nature. ... [they] are all rubbish."<sup>135</sup> With time his Anglophobia lost some of its acidity, but its essence survived and became a foundation of his thinking, often combined with the notion that England was doomed as a nation. In his letter from the U.S., Nakano predicted: "No matter if England wins or loses this war, before long it will perish."<sup>136</sup>

Though Nakano claimed in his letters to his family and friends that his voyage West was a success in that he had achieved his aims, to the outsider it smacks of a lost opportunity, in that the experience seems to only have confirmed Nakano's preconceptions and prejudices, rather than putting them into question or up for revision. In that sense, we may speak of Nakano at age thirty as a man whose mind was already closed.<sup>137</sup>

In most other ways, however, Nakano's voyage West was a full success. It provided him with a clearer understanding of his life's aims and with even stronger self-confidence. In one of

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<sup>135</sup> Nakano Seigō in a letter to Tōyama and Miura Gorō dated August 19, 1916, reproduced in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 207-10.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 207.

<sup>137</sup> Nakano Yasuo writes that his mentors came to a similar conclusion, i.e. that the trip to England only reinforced his prior leanings [偏狭]. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 211.

the last letters from England to his family he wrote: “I am the god of Japan’s fortune. Once I return, the political world will undergo great changes. ... This is not an exaggerated delusion!”<sup>138</sup>

### **Back in Japan**

Before effecting great changes in Japan’s political world, Nakano also had to consider the more immediate question of how to make a living. Returning to his job at the *Asahi* seemed out of the question as the departure of his only mentor, Yugeta, meant Nakano’s support within the *Asahi* had all but vanished.<sup>139</sup> Nakano hung onto the job with the paper until mid-December of 1916, but quit as soon as had found an alternative, writing for the monthly magazine *Eastern Affairs* [*Tōhōjiron* 東方時論]. That magazine was founded by Higashi Norimasa,<sup>140</sup> a China expert, former secretary general at the Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and, like Nakano, a Waseda man.

The new job offered Nakano a number of advantages, not least the prospect of professional advancement. From the outset, Nakano was not only a writer but also an editor with power over the magazine’s contents. This power was soon expanded, as Nakano rose quickly to become editor-in-chief and, following Higashi’s retirement at the end of 1918, Nakano ran the paper practically alone. The magazine’s politics – especially its anti-colonial Pan-Asian stance on East Asian affairs - were also more aligned with Nakano’s than were the *Asahi*’s.<sup>141</sup> Nakano’s work at *Eastern Affairs* also brought him into contact with intellectually stimulating figures. Among the magazine’s contributors we find the names of Yoshino Sakuzō, Miyasaki Tōten, Naitō Konan,

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<sup>138</sup> Nakano Seigō in a letter to his family dated January 30, 1916, quoted in Inomata p. 122.

<sup>139</sup> Yugeta had left the paper soon after Nakano’s departure to England. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 153.

<sup>140</sup> Higashi Norimasa [東則正] (1886 - ?), journalist and China expert.

<sup>141</sup> See the opening article of the founding issue of *Tōhōjiron*, September 1916, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 215.

Baba Tsunego, Kawatsu Susumu, Wakayama Bokusui, Uzaki Rojō, and Itō Masanori, as well as some of Nakano's friends such as Kazami Akira and Ogata Taketora.<sup>142</sup>

The intellectual stimulus and the opportunity for valuable contacts with men of influence increased when Nakano, again with financial support from Yasukawa Kei'ichirō, founded a think tank, which he called "Eastern Society" or "Tōhōkai" [東方会].<sup>143</sup> With its monthly meetings, this forum brought Nakano into regular contact with people from various occupations who shared his interest in Asian affairs. The Tōhōkai membership included the businessmen Kimura Yūji, Kaneko Naokichi, Nagasaki Eizō, Takaki Rikurō, Shiraishi Takahira, Mori Kaku, Fujise Seijirō, and Eguchi Sadae; the Generals Hayashi Sennjūrō, Haraguchi Hatsutarō and Araki Sadao; the diplomats Komura Kin-ichi, Honda Kumatarō and Kimura Eiichi; Fukuda Yūtarō from the Ministry of Finance; the scholars Kawatsu Susumu, Shiozawa Masasada (Nakano's economics professor at Waseda) and Sugimori Kōjirō (his acquaintance from London), and finally, the journalist (and Nakano's father-in-law) Miyake Setsurei.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Yoshino Sakuzō [吉野作造] (1878 - 1933), political scientist at Tokyo Imperial University and influential advocate of democracy; Miyazaki Tōten [宮崎とう天]: (1871-1922). Pan-Asianist and close friend and supporter of the Chinese republican revolutionary Sun Yat-sen; Naitō Konan [内藤湖南] originally called Torajirō [虎次郎] (1866 - 1934), journalist and scholar of East Asian history; Baba Tsunego [馬場恒吾] (1875 - 1956), journalist and political commentator; Kawatsu Susumu (also Kawatsu Sen) [河津暹] (1875 - 1943), economist and professor at Tokyo Imperial University; Wakayama Bokusui [若山牧水], (1885 - 1928), poet; Uzaki Rojō [鵜崎鷺城] (1873 - 1934), journalist and critic also known by his actual first name Kumakichi [熊吉]; Itō Masanori [伊藤正徳] (1889 - 1962), journalist and commentator on military affairs, especially the Japanese Imperial Navy.

<sup>143</sup> The society's name, Tōhōkai, would eventually be reused by Nakano to serve as the name of his fascist party in the 1930s, but the name and their leader, Nakano Seigō, is about all that the think tank and the mass party had in common and they should not be confounded.

<sup>144</sup> Kimura Yūji [木村勇次 sometimes also written 木村雄次] worked as head accountant for the Korean Bank [朝鮮銀行]; Kaneko Naokichi [金子直吉] (1866 - 1944), business man and head of Suzuki Trading Company; Nagasaki Eizō [長崎英造] (1881 - 1953), businessman; Takaki Rikurō [高木陸郎] journalist and channel through which Nakano received financial support from the Mitsui Zaibatsu. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 219 and p. 235-6.); Shiraishi Takahira [白石隆平] or Shiraiwa [白岩] worked for Dalian Steam Shipping [大連汽船]; Mori Kaku [森恪] (1882 - 1932), business man and politician; Fujise Masajirō [藤瀬政次郎] (1867 - 1927), businessman working with Mitsui Trading Company; Eguchi Sadae [江口定條] (1865 - 1946), business man and politician; Hayashi Senjūrō [林銑十郎] (1876 - 1943), army

The new position with Eastern Affairs was not the only change in Nakano's life in the months after his return from Europe. With the help of Okazaki Kunisuke,<sup>145</sup> Nakano found a new family home in Tokyo. While not luxurious, the new house was larger than the family's previous one and even had a small garden, which afforded Nakano's father the joy of growing his own vegetables.

### **Nakano's First Election Campaign**

Amid the tumult of his new job and home, Nakano did not lose sight of his political ambitions. His mentors - Tōyama, Inukai, Kojima, and Okazaki - supported him by introducing him to various politicians with the understanding that Nakano could join one of their respective parties.<sup>146</sup> None of these meetings, however, led Nakano to commit.

Then, in early 1917, about six months after Nakano's return from Europe, Prime Minister Terauchi dissolved the Diet and called for a general election. When Nakano announced his intention to run, many of his mentors warned that it was too early and chose not to support him. Nakano was also unable to secure support from Higashi, the owner of the *Tōhōjiron*, who already

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general and later Prime Minister; Haraguchi Hatsutarō [原口初太郎] (1876-1949), army officer and politician; Araki Sadao [荒木貞夫] (1877 - 1966), army general and politician; Komura Kin'ichi [小村欣一] (1883-1930), diplomat; Honda Kumatarō [本多熊太郎] (1874 - 1948), diplomat and foreign policy hard-liner whom Nakano had met in Korea; Kimura Eiichi [木村鋭市 sometimes misspelled 鋭一] (1879 - 1947), diplomat; Tomita Yūtarō [富田勇太郎] (1883 - 1946), bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance.

<sup>145</sup> Okazaki Kunisuke [岡崎邦輔] (1854 - 1936), party politician.

<sup>146</sup> Among others, Nakano also met with Seiyūkai president Hara Kei, whom he had so severely criticized in the past. According to Nakano Yasuo, Hara Kei invited Nakano to join the Seiyūkai, but Nakano rejected this feeling much closer to Inukai's Kokumintō. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 219. Hara Kei recorded Nakano's visits briefly in his diary. See Hara Kei [原敬], "The Hara Kei Diary" [原敬日記], ed. Hara Kei'ichirō [原奎一郎], 6 vols. (Tokyo: Fukumura Publishing, 1981), See entry for September 14, 1916, vol. 4, p. 209.

had decided to support his former Waseda classmate Nagai Ryūtarō.<sup>147</sup> Only Yasukawa Kei'ichirō, a Fukuoka coal baron, came through and once more supported Nakano financially.

Nakano ran as a free candidate, without affiliation to any party and against two opponents: Matsunaga Yasuzaemon,<sup>148</sup> who hailed from Nagasaki, had made his fortune in coal and electricity and at the time served as head of the Hakata Chamber of Commerce; and Miyagawa Ikkan, a former rival and classmate of Nakano's at the Shūyūkan and Waseda. Of the two, Miyagawa was favored by the local political elite because unlike Matsunaga, he was a Fukuoka native. Nakano's decision to run alongside Miyagawa split the local vote between two native sons. After the votes were cast on April 20, 1917, Matsunaga secured the Diet seat with 937 votes; Nakano and Miyagawa followed with 528 and 352 votes each, respectively. This was the first and last time Nakano would fail to win an election.

Nakano continued to work as a journalist until the next election, keeping his political aims in sight. To this end, he joined a number of political societies and think tanks, including the very heterogeneous and short-lived Rōsōkai [老壮会], founded by Mitsukawa Kametarō in the aftermath of the rice riots of 1918. There Nakano was brought into contact for the first time with Kita Ikki, who became a crucial, if not particularly close, contact in the years to come.<sup>149</sup> After leaving the Rōsōkai, Nakano became active in the Reconstruction League or Kaizō Dōmei [改造同盟], which was founded in August 1919. Under the overarching aim of reforming Japan by peaceful means, the League's program included as its main goals the realization of universal

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<sup>147</sup> Nagai Ryūtarō [永井柳太郎] (1881 – 1944), politician.

<sup>148</sup> Matsunaga Yasuzaemon [松永安左エ門] (1875 - 1971), businessman.

<sup>149</sup> Following Nakano's return from the Paris Peace Conference in early 1919, Kita approached Mitsukawa Kametarō [満川亀太郎] and asked him to send Nakano and Nagai Ryūtarō a copy of his critique of the Versailles Conference ("Judgment on the Versailles Peace Conference" [ヴェルサイユ会議に対する最高判決]. 1919). See Kita's letter to Mitsukawa quoted in Inomata, p. 152-3.

suffrage, the establishment of democratic politics [民本的政治], official recognition of labor unions, and reform of the established parties.<sup>150</sup>

The years from 1917-20 also saw the start of Nakano's career as a speaker and lecturer. While writing on the major (and often also on the minor) political events of his day, Nakano started to hold political lectures and speech rallies both in Japan and abroad. Among the many themes on which he commented on during these years, three took up the bulk of his energy: the Russian revolution of late 1917; the Rice Riots of the summer/fall of 1918; and the Versailles Peace Negotiations of early 1919.

While Nakano wrote extensively about the Russian Revolution from its outset, the question of how Japan should react to it became central to his political activities in the first half of the 1920s. We return to this question in more detail later, but note now that Nakano's reaction to the Russian Revolution of 1917 was very similar to his reaction to the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Not only did he support the event as an expression of the will of the people, and accordingly demanded recognition of the Soviet government, he also rejected the notion that a Communist Russia posed an ideological threat to Japan and that Japan (or any other country) should intervene in Russian domestic affairs.

### **The Rice Riots of 1918**

During WW1, Japan's economy experienced an export-led boom, not only because it supplied arms, munitions and supplies to its European allies, but also because European businesses retreated from Asia's markets, leaving a gap filled gladly by Japanese entrepreneurs. For the first time since the opening of the country, Japan enjoyed a trade surplus. The economic

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<sup>150</sup> For information about the Reconstruction League, its membership and program see Itō Takashi, "The Establishment of the Reformist Faction during the Taishō Period" [大正期「革新」派の成立], (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō [塙書房], 1978), p. 174-194.

boom had a downside, however, in the form of shortages and rising prices at home. When the price of rice, Japan's staple food, rose from Yen 23.78 to Yen 41.06 between January and August 1918, pent-up popular frustration about inflation finally erupted in riots that spread across the entire country and in the end required Army intervention to quell.

Nakano, who already at the time of the first Movement to Protect the Constitution had enthusiastically welcomed popular unrest as the harbinger of a spontaneous popular revolution, saw the 1918 Rice Riots in a similar light. In two pieces published in September of that year, he identified and encouraged the revolutionary potential of the situation. In the first, he stated at the outset that "these rioters are to be despised" but was quick to add that "they are nevertheless a part of the people."<sup>151</sup> He then noted how in some instances the police, soldiers and sailors sent to suppress the riots had shown signs of support for the rebels, leading him to speculate about the possibility of a popular uprising:

"If things go one step further and the police were to join the rioters and the soldiers would become revolutionaries, it would be a momentous event indeed. In any nation, a revolution is not a matter of armed force but a matter of ideas and the problems of daily life. If these problems come to threaten the livelihood of the people, then ideas held by the general public will become radical, and even if you have several million soldiers to cover the entire country with an iron net ... you will not be able to stop the people on their way."<sup>152</sup>

The second article, titled "In Memory of Ōshio Heihachirō," is probably one of Nakano's best-known works.<sup>153</sup> Partly historical and partly theoretical, the essay comes as close as anything Nakano ever wrote to outlining a theory of revolution. In it, Nakano wrote that the 1918 Rice

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<sup>151</sup> The quotes are taken from Nakano Seigō, "Editorial", in *Tōhōjiron*, September 1918, quoted in Inomata p. 127-128.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Nakano Seigō "In Memory of Ōshio Heihachirō" [大塩平八郎を憶う] originally published in *Tōhōjiron*, September 1918, full text is reprinted in "Expressions of the Soul" [魂を吐く], (Tokyo, May, 1938), p. 91-116.

Riots reminded him of the story of Ōshio Heihachirō, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century public official, educator and Wang Yang-ming scholar who during the Tempō famine of the 1830s tried to help the starving by distributing food, eventually even selling his library to buy rice. After exhausting his entire fortune and all legal means to save the famished, Ōshio broke into the government's rice storages and led a revolt that the authorities suppressed bloodily. Ōshio's revolt, Nakano wrote, was not only justified but also praiseworthy; he added that he himself "looked up to Heihachirō, who sincerely adhered to his beliefs to the death."<sup>154</sup>

Parallel to telling Ōshio's story, Nakano formulated a moral standard that accommodated revolutions within a political philosophy heavily influenced by the ideas of Wang Yang-ming. In doing so he provided a moral justification - however general - for those participating in the Rice Riots. He begins:

"Sometimes a rebel will become the savior of his brethren, and at other times an outlaw will become the guardian god of the nation. Both Saigō Takamori and Ōshio Heihachirō are such men. Not only is it clear to the people of this world that their motives are worthy of praise, but the very act of their rebellion has also to be seen as something sacred."<sup>155</sup>

While conceding that their actions "had broken the law of the country and upset the public order," Nakano stated that the two men had broken the law "in carrying out their deepest beliefs," and in doing so had "entered into the sphere of morality that exists above the law." He then wondered: "Who can call this a crime that ought to be punished according to the laws of the land?"<sup>156</sup> To Nakano the answer was clearly that acts such as those carried out by Ōshio should not be punished but praised and he reminded skeptical readers that "the *shishi* of the Restoration

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> All quotes taken from Ibid., p. 92.



were considered rebels by the old *bakufu* and then became the founders of the law of the new government.”<sup>157</sup> At the very least, “In Memory of Ōshio Heihachirō” was an expression of Nakano’s sympathy with the rioters and a public defense of their actions. In a more general sense, it was also an encouragement. It was no coincidence that Nakano began the essay asking: “Is there no Ōshio in today’s world?”<sup>158</sup>

### **The Peace Negotiations at Paris**

In late 1918, Nakano decided spontaneously to cover the Paris Peace Conference. He traveled on the same ship as the Japanese delegation under vice-plenipotentiary Makino and spent his days on board reading news and talking to Japan’s representatives. Roughly speaking, Japan hoped to achieve two objectives in the negotiations: first, securing recognition of Japan’s special rights in the Far East generally, and especially rights over former German possessions in China and the Pacific, which Japan had conquered during WW1; second, including a racial-equality clause in the League of Nations’ charter.

Long before arriving in Paris, Nakano harbored serious doubts about whether Japan’s delegation could achieve its aims.<sup>159</sup> According to Nakano, Japan’s delegates were “modest”<sup>160</sup> and full of “good intentions”<sup>161</sup> but lacked the “political acumen”<sup>162</sup> necessary for holding their

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>159</sup> Already before his departure Nakano had written “During the war our country’s diplomacy was without direction, confronted with peace it is without preparation.” Nakano Seigō in *Tōhōjiron*, December 1918. He would repeat this argument in Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction” [世界改造の巷より], (Tokyo: Tōhōjirion-sha, April 1919), p. 3.

<sup>160</sup> See Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p. 6 and p. 13.

<sup>162</sup> About vice plenipotentiary Makino, Nakano wrote: “In his motives Makino is without sin. If one were to look for a sin, then the only one would be that he has no acumen as a politician.” Nakano Seigō,

own in the negotiations. He likened their appearance at the Conference - itself a “scene of carnage where economic and military power are matched”<sup>163</sup> - to “sheep being thrown among a pack of fighting dogs.”<sup>164</sup> This applied even to the otherwise well-liked vice-plenipotentiary Makino,<sup>165</sup> and was especially true of plenipotentiary Saionji, who had delayed his departure from Japan and was still *en route* to France when, according to Nakano, the heads of the US and England had already begun meeting and had reached agreement on a “program of Anglo-American domination of the world.”<sup>166</sup>

Nakano himself arrived in Paris together with Japan’s delegation on January 8, 1919. The events he witnessed over the following weeks seemed to confirm his worst fears. On January 28, only 10 days after the negotiations began, Nakano observed how the Chinese delegates - with the support and encouragement of the US - “threw a bomb”<sup>167</sup> at the feet of the startled Japanese representatives by questioning the legality of all Japanese rights in China gained since 1897, and especially those gained through WWI’s notorious 21 Demands. Developing a theme to which he would return frequently in future, Nakano wrote that China was allowing itself to be used as a puppet of the Anglo-Saxon Powers, in this case the United States, who, “wishing to feast on

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“Witnessing the Peace Conference” [講和会議を目撃して], (Tokyo, 1919), p. 20.

<sup>163</sup> Nakano used the phrase “scene of carnage” [修羅場] repeatedly. See Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference” [講和会議を目撃して], (Tokyo, 1919), p. 8, but also Nakano Seigō, “The Color of the Japanese Flag is Fading” [旭日旗影薄し], in *Tōhōjiron*, May 1919, republished in Nakano Seigō, “Facing the Facts” [現実を直面して], (Tokyo 1921).

<sup>164</sup> Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction”, p. 3,

<sup>165</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction”, p. 2 as well as Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference”, p. 9 and 12.

<sup>166</sup> Quote taken from Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction”, p. 23. See also Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 93 and 110-101.

<sup>167</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference”, p. 61 and 69.

Japan, do not use their own hands .... but instead use China.”<sup>168</sup> The events of January 28 left a deep impression on Nakano, for on that day the Chinese representatives

“aggressively came down [荒く食い掛けりし] on the Japanese delegation. This came to them truly like a bolt out of the blue. Alas, January 28 is truly an important date for we Japanese that should be remembered. On this day, the fate of our country at the peace conference was cut short ... The ringleaders of this were, on the one hand, our good neighbor and friend China, and on the other hand, America, to whom we have been heavily indebted ever since they opened the port of Uraga for us.”<sup>169</sup>

The prospect of China, a fellow Asian nation, turning against Japan under direction of the US truly alarmed Nakano. The following day, Nakano visited a member of the Chinese delegation, and engaged the latter in a heated argument on Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>170</sup> Soon after, Nakano sent a telegram to Tōyama in Japan, in which he urged that public opinion be aroused against the Peace Conference.<sup>171</sup> Unable to continue watching inactively, Nakano in mid-February decided to return to Japan – long before the negotiations’ end and a good ten days before Japan’s plenipotentiary had even arrived in Paris – to “inform the public about how useless our plenipotentiaries are and demand their dismissal.”<sup>172</sup> In a piece intended to shame the Japanese delegation into action, Nakano warned that “the Paris Peace Conference represents one giant threat to our country” and expressed his hope that Japan’s “delegates will put up a good fight ... Even if the good fight will yield nothing and they return defeated, I hope that they will

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>169</sup> Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction”, p. 6.

<sup>170</sup> Nakano’s account of the conversation can be found in Ibid., p. 10-11.

<sup>171</sup> Telegram from Nakano Seigō to Tōyama Mitsuru quoted in Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>172</sup> That was the explanation given by Nakano to fellow journalist Itō Masanori [伊藤正徳] (1889 - 1962) a specialist in military affairs, who had also been sent France to cover the peace conference for the Jiji-Shimpō-sha [時事新報社]. Itō quoted in Inomata, p. 145.

stand before our 60 million brethren with wounds and cuts obtained in battle and blood smeared across their face.”<sup>173</sup>

Nakano left France on February 22, 1919 and, traveling via London, he picked up his acquaintance Sugimori Kōjirō, who later recalled that Nakano was “mad with indignation” at the Paris developments.<sup>174</sup> The news the duo read in newspapers obtained at stops along the way did not calm Nakano’s worries.<sup>175</sup> The headline of Nakano’s last dispatch written along the way - “The Color of the Japanese Flag is Fading” - reflected his increasingly pessimistic outlook.<sup>176</sup>

After arriving in Japan on April 29, 1919, Nakano wasted no time before publicizing what he considered a diplomatic disaster in the making. Starting on May 4, he gave a series of speeches organized by the *Osaka Daily News*, in which he alarmed the Japanese public.<sup>177</sup> From May 6 on, Nakano also started publishing a series of articles in the *Osaka Asahi News*. As so often in the past, the series was eventually re-published as a book, which became Nakano’s greatest literary success to date.<sup>178</sup> The volume went through more than ten reprints. As a welcome side-effect, the circulation of Nakano’s magazine, *Tōhōjiron*, increased from two to

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<sup>173</sup> Both quotes are taken from a pamphlet Nakano wrote on February 7, 1919 subsequently published in Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction” p. 29 and 30 respectively.

<sup>174</sup> Nakano’s indignation with the outcome of the Paris Peace conference would remain a constant feature of his thinking and writing. See for example Nakano Seigō, “The Attitude of the Japanese Delegation at the Peace Conference” in “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction”, (Tokyo, 1933), p. 140-146.

<sup>175</sup> From the papers bought while in Singapore, Nakano learned of the recent uprisings in Japan’s Korean colony, also known as the March 1 Incident [独立万歳事件].

<sup>176</sup> “Nakano Seigō, “The Color of the Japanese Flag is Fading” [旭日旗影薄し], in *Tōhōjiron*, May 1919.

<sup>177</sup> The first speech held at a public hall in Osaka was published by the *Osaka Daily News* under the headline “Two Sides of the Peace Conference - Listen to the Passionate and Painful Report of why the Young and Spirited Nakano Seigō is Worried about the Future of the Nation” *Osaka Daily News* [大阪毎日新聞], May 6, 1919.

<sup>178</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference” [講和会議を目撃して], (Tokyo, Tōhōjiron-sha, 1919).

seven thousand copies. The novelist Ozaki Shirō<sup>179</sup> described his feelings upon reading one of Nakano's dispatches from Paris as follows:

“The first time I was moved by reading one of his articles was in January 1919. Nakano had attended the peace conference opening in Paris ... There he witnessed how our plenipotentiary was cornered and made fun of by the Chinese delegation .... in front of the Powers. His dispatches from Europe were filled with anger and disappointment. Unable to constrain the indignation that filled his entire being, he made a little pamphlet with the title ‘The Colors of the Japanese Flag are Fading’[旭日旗影薄し] ... Reading this pamphlet, of which every word and every phrase were filled with defying letters, I was impressed by the elegance of his style, even if I had little interest in diplomacy.”<sup>180</sup>

Among the members of the Hara Kei cabinet, however, which together with the plenipotentiary Saionji were the main targets of Nakano's biting critique, the reports were less well-received.<sup>181</sup>

### **An Outline of Nakano's Political Views up to 1920 - Domestic Affairs**

Having told the story of Nakano life in the years 1909-20, let us now try to outline the contours of his political thinking and thereby build a framework against which future developments can be measured. Central to Nakano's view of Japanese domestic politics in these years was the idea that the Meiji Restoration held the promise of being a popular revolution, but that this promise, for myriad reasons, had not been realized. From this lack of fulfillment flowed a number of consequences and questions.

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<sup>179</sup> Ozaki Shirō [尾崎士郎] (1898 – 1964), writer.

<sup>180</sup> Ozaki Shirō quoted in Inomata, p. 151. The quote is taken from Ozaki Shirō “Nakano Seigō” in Bungei Shunjū, October 1963, special edition.

<sup>181</sup> On September 13, 1919, Hara Kei noted in his diary, how upset vice-plenipotentiary Makino had been over the media coverage of the peace negotiations in Paris. See Hara Kei [原敬], “The Hara Kei Diary” [原敬日記], ed. Hara Kei'ichirō [原奎一郎], 6 vols., (Tokyo 1965), vol. 5, p. 142.

First, the legacy of the failed Meiji Restoration contained the imperative to strive for the realization of its popular ideals. Where Saigō, the leaders of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, and the party politicians had failed, others – including Nakano – had to carry on and aim to achieve the promise of popular politics. If one were to speak of Nakano’s political mission in life, this was it! If there was one constant aim in Nakano’s political career, it was popular participation in politics, the political awakening and emancipation of the masses. In the 1910s, this made Nakano into one of the most vociferous advocates of constitutional politics, which to him meant that the party with a majority in the Diet should form the government – or, in Nakano’s words: “Those who in proposing policies for the country succeed in leading the majority of the people should receive the imperial command to form a cabinet.”<sup>182</sup> For the same reason, Nakano became a champion of universal suffrage in the 1920s and – less predictably, but equally naturally – fell for fascism’s popular appeal in the 1930s.

Second, understanding Nakano’s conception of what Japanese politics were and what they ought to be reveals the crux of his critiques of political opponents (and his praise of allies). Politicians whose “only aim was holding power and whose only fear was losing it” stood in the way of the natural course of history toward popular political participation and, accordingly, came under harsh attack by Nakano.<sup>183</sup> Nakano’s populism made him anti-establishment and anti-status quo – or, more specifically, anti-*genrō* and pro-Saigō, anti-Satchō-cliques and pro-Freedom and People’s Rights Movement, anti-*hambatsu* (alternatively anti-*batsuzoku*) and pro-political parties, and, finally, anti-transcendental cabinets and pro-party cabinet.

What means did Nakano consider employing to spur popular participation? He believed overthrowing the political leaders who opposed progress would be futile, for such leaders would

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<sup>182</sup> Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin, Hachi-Jū– Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight”, p. 266.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

always be replaced by others with similar beliefs. Moreover, it did not solve the fundamental problem beneath, which lay in the people's lethargy:

"Even if you cut down Katsura, the people will not awake. Even if you slaughter Hara, some other opportunist [売節者] will emerge on the surface of society ... In the end, politics reflect the spirit of the entire people, for it is due to the fact that the people spoil Katsura and Hara that they can pursue their interest as they like."<sup>184</sup>

Any attempt to effect political progress that did not involve stirring a popular spirit of self-determination was futile. From that conviction flowed Nakano's prescription regarding politicians' primary task, namely to act as educators: "To explain the ways of government and enlighten the hearts and minds of the people is the basic task of politicians. When political power ... reaches the hearts of the people, it will naturally result in returning it [political power] into their hands."<sup>185</sup>

Once the people were awoken, reactionaries and conservatives could still stand in their way, but ultimately their opposition would be overcome. Whether politics would progress peacefully or violently was determined solely by whether the popular will could be realized peacefully or was obstructed and frustrated. In the context of the 1918 Rice Riots, Nakano also argued that, under certain circumstances, violent revolts and revolutions were justified. He believed in a "freedom of revolution" [革命の自由], a concept whose origins he placed with the political philosophers of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. While, generally speaking, "the law of the land should be respected and the people who are placed under the law of the land should accept being bound by that law," Nakano saw the possibility that the law was faulty simply because it was crafted and administered by human beings. In such cases, the law required changing, or those administering it

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

needed to be replaced. Otherwise “the well-being of country and people will be devastated.” Doing so “by legal means is called reform [改革]... if these reforms are carried out smoothly and without stalling, then the country will be at peace and the people will be happy and prosperous.”<sup>186</sup> But other circumstances called for other means:

“What if those administering the law are caught by private interests and use their power to keep the people from carrying out legal reforms only to maintain the present order for another day, thereby extending the difficulties of the people for another day? Then it is only natural that someone who does not obey the man-made law of the land rises defiantly with no regard for the law or the people administering it and tries to change by non-legal means. This kind of reform that falls outside the law of the land is called a revolution [革命].”<sup>187</sup>

Under such circumstances, revolution was not merely a right, but a duty, for “when the evil customs of an age cannot be mended by relying solely on legal means ... it is expected from these heroes, who according to the law of the land are rebels, to do away with decorum and clear the way for the progress of society... Accordingly, a criminal under the law of the land can be a champion of morality.”<sup>188</sup>

Progress, in short, could come about either through peaceful, legal reforms or through violent, illegal revolutions. Peaceful and legal reform was preferable, but, if natural progress were obstructed it would eventually push its course by brute force, as it had done during the Meiji Restoration or the Satsuma rebellion. Nakano not only glorified past rebellions (notably, the Meiji Restoration, the Satsuma rebellion and the uprising led by Ōshio Heihachirō), but also welcomed and supported popular riots, protest movements, and revolutions in his own day (e.g. the Movement to protect the Constitution, the Rice Riots following WW1, revolutions in China and

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<sup>186</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō “In Memory of Ōshio Heihachirō” reprinted in “Expressions of the Soul”, p. 92.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 92.



Russia). To put it crudely, every time there was a rumble in the street, Nakano took it as the first sign of popular awakening and hoped it might be the beginning of an “outburst of popular vitality” leading to another Restoration. He was regularly disappointed.

While welcoming all sorts of violent outbursts of popular dissatisfaction in his speeches and writings, Nakano’s own behavior was much more careful and he generally shied away from violence as a means of attaining his political goals (except when defending himself against thugs).

### **People and Leaders**

Nakano’s fervent support for popular uprisings and belief in the power of the people was not without its contradictions. Despite his constant talk about the people’s vitality and resourcefulness, Nakano also called them “stupid masses” [衆愚] lost in the “slumber of indulgence” [惑溺の眠り]. Moreover, he saw the people not as active agents of history, but as passive, lethargic, and in need of awakening, arousal and “rescue from their indulgence.”<sup>189</sup> Thus, in his “On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era,” he starts off describing the Meiji Restoration as an “outburst of popular vitality bottled up under 300 years of *bakufu* government”<sup>190</sup> - and yet his narrative of the events revolves around the actions of a limited number of individuals.<sup>191</sup> Agents of political change, according to him, were exceptional individuals. Such agents could be virtuous individuals such as Saigō, Napoleon, Ōshio Heihachirō, etc. or corrupt figures such as the representatives of the *genrō* or *hambatsu* who,

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<sup>189</sup> Both quotes taken from Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin Hachi-Jū– Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight”, p. 262.

<sup>190</sup> Quotes taken from Nakano Seigō “On the Popular Rights Movement in the Meiji Era”, p. 1.

<sup>191</sup> This contradiction has been pointed out by Tetsuo Najita, “Nakano Seigō and the Spirit of the Meiji Restoration in Twentieth-Century Japan”, p. 380.

seeking to protect their vested interests, “manipulate the people ... control the majority in the Diet and thus suppress the ambitions of the people.”<sup>192</sup>

So how, exactly, did Nakano believe a politician could wake the people? “Explaining the ways of government and enlightening the hearts of the people” certainly included keeping the people informed. On more than one occasion, Nakano praised politicians who told their voting electorate about the nation’s situation, even when the truth was unpleasant. Lloyd George earned Nakano’s respect for doing so at the outset of WW1,<sup>193</sup> as did Hitler for telling Germany about the events in Stalingrad in early 1943. Similarly, Nakano criticized politicians who failed to keep the public informed, including, for example, Japan’s Premier Tōjō during the Pacific War.

If Nakano’s own actions as a journalist and politician-in-the-making during the years 1909-20 are any indication, however, keeping the public informed was not a politician’s sole responsibility. On occasion, political duties also included whipping up popular emotions in the hope of turning demonstration into riot, riot into revolt, and revolt into revolution or restoration. Nakano’s belief in this duty was obvious during the Taishō political crisis, the 1918 rice riots, and his reporting on the Peace Conference of Versailles. In each instance, he tried to fan the flames of popular dissent.<sup>194</sup> At the risk of oversimplifying, one might say that Nakano believed the successful politician knew both how to turn a wind into a storm and then how to ride that storm.

Nakano’s conception of good political leadership notably lacked any element of coercion. In his eyes, appealing to the people was enough.<sup>195</sup> The good politician should not lead the people

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<sup>192</sup> Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin, Hachi-Jū– Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight”, p. 266.

<sup>193</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference”, p. 5-6.

<sup>194</sup> In one of his dispatches sent to Japan from Paris he wrote as much, stating that the aim of his “running about, talking, campaigning, criticizing and attacking” was to “appeal to my countrymen and arouse public opinion, which I believe to be the most suitable means to get my voice heard by the delegates.” Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction” [世界改造の巷より], p. 1.

<sup>195</sup> Accordingly, when in 1929 Nakano published a collection of his speeches up to that date, he titled it “Appealing to the People” [国民に訴う], based on Fichte’s “Addresses to the German Nation” [translated

like an ox by a ring through the nose, nor by carrot (let alone stick), but by implanting convictions in their minds and emotions in their hearts that would move the people to do the right thing. One may call this noble, but it also was convenient, in that it made it easy to shift responsibility onto the people whenever things did not turn out as Nakano had anticipated. After the collapse of the Movement to Protect the Constitution, Nakano explained its failure as follows: “If we look back and ask for the fundamental reasons why the movement to protect the constitution stumbled midway, then we have to conclude that it is because our nation's people have still not awoken from the ancient sleep of indulgence.”<sup>196</sup>

### **Foreign Affairs**

Nakano's views on foreign affairs were, fundamentally, an enlarged replica of his domestic views. For one thing, Nakano typically supported the popular cause when analyzing foreign political situations, a tendency that led him to support the revolutionaries in China in 1911 and in Russia in 1917. Regarding China in 1911, Nakano wrote: “Since in political matters I love freedom, I do not rejoice at the despotism of a particular clique or party. Accordingly, I hate the despotism of the Qing Dynasty and welcome the liberal thought of the revolutionaries.”<sup>197</sup>

The similarities between Nakano's stances on domestic and international politics run deeper: If in domestic politics it was a leader's mission to awaken the people from their slumber and lead them toward political emancipation and participation, in international affairs, it was Japan's mission to awaken the colonized people from their slumber and lead them toward liberation and independence from colonialism. In both cases, Nakano aimed at breaking the status

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into Japanese as ドイツ国民に告ぐ]. Nakano Seigō, “Appealing to the People: A collection of Speeches by Nakano Seigō” [国民に訴う: 中野正剛大演説集] (Tokyo, April, 1929).

<sup>196</sup> Nakano Seigō “Shichi-Kin Hachi-Jū– Caught Seven Times, Freed Eight”, p. 262.

<sup>197</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata, p. 67.

quo and, in both cases, this aim made the defenders of that status quo his natural enemies and the challengers his allies.

### **Enemies and Allies**

Given such a worldview, it followed that Nakano perceived the Western colonial Powers as Japan's enemies. As beneficiaries of the global order, they were most heavily invested in its maintenance. Such a stance pitted them against the suppressed nations of the world, which Nakano believed Japan would lead to freedom. While he directed his enmity against the West in general during his youth, his worldview became somewhat more nuanced with age, as he recognized important differences and power shifts within the Western camp. If in his early years his ire was directed at "the Powers" [強国] in general, in the course of WW1 and the fall of Czarist Russia, Imperial Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it focused more on England, America and France. While France subsequently lost priority in Nakano's thinking, the US loomed increasingly large as Japan's main enemy.<sup>198</sup> He believed the "Program of Anglo-Saxon World Domination" through which England and America sought to cement their position following WW1 ought to be countered in East Asia by a "Far Eastern Monroe Doctrine."<sup>199</sup>

One overarching constant in Nakano's worldview was his life-long hostility toward England – and, on the flip side of that Anglophobia, a life-long sympathy for Germany, which he viewed as a challenger of the global order. The first signs of his affections for Germany became visible in his letters from England to his family during WW1. Repeatedly, he mentioned both his wish to study German and his disappointment over the fact that the poisoned war-time

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<sup>198</sup> For the shift in importance among the Western Powers see Nakano Seigō, "Witnessing the Peace Conference", p. 40.

<sup>199</sup> The phrase "Program for Anglo-Saxon World Domination" appeared first in Nakano's coverage of the Paris Peace Conference. Nakano Seigō, "Witnessing the Peace Conference", p. 18, & 22. His counter program, "The Far Eastern Monroe Doctrine" was born at around the same time. See *ibid.* p. 81. Both would become integral parts of his analysis of world politics.

atmosphere rendered such study impossible.<sup>200</sup> His prediction that England was doomed found its counterpart in a belief that Germany would win the war.<sup>201</sup>

### **Relations with Japan's Asian neighbors**

Defining relations with the West was relatively clear-cut, but things were more difficult with respect to Japan's neighbors, the colonized suppressed nations of Asia whom Japan should liberate. The problem was that Japan simply did not play the role that Nakano had cast for it. Until the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 it had been possible to view Japan as an anti-colonial force in international politics. In the years after 1905, however, Japan step by step abandoned the role of liberator, choosing instead - much to Nakano's dismay - to be "the last among the strong, rather than the first among the weak."<sup>202</sup> At each step along the way, Nakano criticized domestic leaders for failing to realize what he saw as Japan's destiny. This had been the rationale behind Nakano's support for the Chinese revolutionaries in 1911, his critique of Katō's 21 Demands and his condemnation of the Nishihara loans<sup>203</sup> following a trip to China in the summer of 1918.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> See for example, Nakano Seigō in a letter to his family dated September 3, 1915 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 195.

<sup>201</sup> In a letter to his family dated May 5, 1915 Nakano writes about English: "They cannot possible win against Germany." The letter can be found in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 188.

<sup>202</sup> Nakano Seigō "Editorial: Advice to Japanese and Chinese Statesmen" [時論：日支政客に誨う], in *Tōhōjiron*, May 1918, p. 6.

<sup>203</sup> Officially, the loans made to the Beijing government were to be used for civilian projects but most of the money went into armaments used to fight the southern government. Nakano criticized the loans in "The Far East is in Danger, our Country is at Danger" [東亜危うし、国危うし], in *Tōhōjiron*, August 1917.

<sup>204</sup> Nakano traveled to China in the summer of 1918, visiting Shanghai, Hankou, Beijing and Dalian where he met some of his former student friends from Waseda, but also many Chinese government leaders such as Tang Shaoyi [唐紹儀] (1862 – 1938), Sun Hung-Yi [孫洪伊] (1872-1936), Duan Qirui [段祺瑞] (1865-1936), and Feng Guozhang [馮國璋] (1859-1919). His thoughts and experiences are described in Nakano Seigō "Editorial: Advice to Japanese and Chinese Statesmen" [時論：日支政客に誨う], in *Tōhōjiron*, May 1918.

Nakano offered two explanations for why Japan failed to take on the role of liberator and champion of freedom in East Asia. First, he said, Japan lacked the necessary strength - a view shared by many of his contemporaries.<sup>205</sup> In the course of WW1, Japan's position *vis-à-vis* the Powers had grown weaker in both absolute and relative terms. Since Japan had not participated fully in the fighting while other nations had developed their military and technological powers, Japan's "national defense facilities are markedly behind the global trends."<sup>206</sup>

Japan had weakened also in relative terms, because before the Great War, Japan had been one of half a dozen Powers of similar strength, but highly heterogeneous interests, in Asia, enabling Japan to play the others against each other. With Europe's self-destruction (and the fall of Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary), geopolitical power was concentrated in the hands of far fewer players and the two most powerful ones - England and America - could not be played against each other, because "both ... had come to see Japan as their common enemy in the South Pacific as well as in China."<sup>207</sup>

Japanese weakness, however, was only part of the problem. In addition, Nakano faulted the Japanese political class, and especially Japan's diplomats, for a lack of self-confidence and a tendency to overestimate the Western Powers' strength. This psychological mindset resulted from the fact that most Japanese diplomats had been trained during an era when submissiveness toward the West was imperative.<sup>208</sup> Docility, "good intentions" and "modesty"<sup>209</sup> were the words that

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<sup>205</sup> See Itō Masanori [伊藤正徳] "Coming Back to One's Country, there are Tears" [故国に帰りて涙あり] in *Tōhōjiron*, January 1920.

<sup>206</sup> Nakano Seigō "The Not-Thorough-Going Foreign Relations Investigation Society" [不徹底の外交調査会] in *Tōhōjiron*, July 1917.

<sup>207</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Witnessing the Peace Conference", p. 34 and following.

<sup>208</sup> The argument that Japan's diplomats were submissive toward the Powers can be found frequently in Nakano writings. For example, Nakano Seigō "Getting Rid of Diplomacy Carried out with Only One Eye and One Ear" [片眼隻耳の外交を排す], in *Tōhōjiron*, April 1918 or Nakano Seigō "The Far East is in Danger, our Country is in Danger" [東亜危うし、国危うし], in *Tōhōjiron*, August 1917.

Nakano used to describe the Japanese delegation in Versailles, only to add that in international affairs, resoluteness, hardness and even genius were needed. Accordingly, he gave the delegation “full points for morals,” but “zero points for politics.”<sup>210</sup>

Worse still were diplomats who combined “idolizing the white” with “despising the yellow,” such as Japan’s envoy to China, Hayashi Gonsuke.<sup>211</sup>

“As much as he is submissive toward the white races, he is also arrogant toward the Chinese and puts up a show of strength that will only earn us the antipathy of the young politicians in the north [of China] and insult the politicians of the south, inviting the hostility of the Chinese people in general.”<sup>212</sup>

Nakano, moreover, believed that Japan’s meekness toward the West was not limited to its diplomatic corps, but rather endemic and pervasive across the country’s elite, including the press corps, which idolized foreign papers such as the English *Times* and the French *Le Temps*. Accordingly, Nakano demanded: “If you want Japanese diplomacy to become independent from England, you must first make the Japanese newspapers independent from England.”<sup>213</sup>

### **Contradictions in Nakano’s Views on Foreign Affairs**

Of course Nakano’s perspective on Japan’s relations with its neighbors was not without contradictions. For one, Nakano was unwilling to give up any of the territorial conquests Japan had made since 1868 at the expense of its Asian neighbors. For instance, while he conceded that

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<sup>209</sup> Both quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, “From the Site of Global Reconstruction”, p. 6 and p. 13.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>211</sup> Hayashi Gonsuke [林権助] (1860-1939) Japanese diplomat whose appointment Nakano criticized severely in Nakano Seigō, “Opening Article” [巻頭], in *Tōhōjiron*, February 1918.

<sup>212</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Opening Article” [巻頭], in *Tōhōjiron*, February 1918.

<sup>213</sup> In Nakano Seigō “Getting Rid of Diplomacy Carried out with Only One Eye and One Ear” [片眼隻耳の外交を排す], in *Tōhōjiron*, April 1918.

the territories that Russia had leased from China and that Japan had obtained through the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) “belonged rightfully to China” and that they would “have to be returned without further ado after a certain period of time,” Nakano wrote that Japan’s investment in blood and treasure to acquire and develop these territories meant returning them would be difficult and produced a number of justifications why Japan should hold on to them.<sup>214</sup>

Nakano’s attitude toward Korea, the crown jewel of Japan’s empire, repeated this contradictory pattern in that he condemned colonialism in the case of the Western Powers while at the same time condoning it in the case of Japan. When, on his way back from Versailles, Nakano learned of the riots and revolts that had shocked Korea in the spring of 1919, he sympathized with the Korean nationalists seeking independence:

“There is no reason why in our day and age this sort of thought [i.e., nationalism] should not find its way into Korea ... Nobody can hide the fact that in Korea a restless spirit is spreading ... When witnessing the rebellion in Egypt, I shed a tear on behalf of the beautiful young revolutionaries. How can I remain calm and cold toward events in Korea? If I did, I would not be any different from those politicians in the West who, while talking about justice and humanity, secretly try to control the independent nations of the world.”<sup>215</sup>

Still, when it came to the question of whether to grant Korea independence, Nakano was opposed and would remain consistently opposed in the future. The argument Nakano put forward for this opposition forms the basis of his remarkable justification of both Japan’s empire as well as its colonial ambitions. In an essay from Korea, Nakano wrote that WW1 had shown the danger and foolishness of small nations’ desire to remain independent [小国主義], because

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<sup>214</sup> Quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, “Manchurian Travel Journal” in “Manchuria and Korea as I saw them”, p. 169-73.

<sup>215</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference”, p. 171-2. Two years later he would write in a similar vein, that it would be unnatural for Koreans not to develop a strong nationalist movement, at a time when all over the world peoples were developing a national consciousness. See Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 22.



small, independent nations had little military defense against larger countries in times of conflict. He therefore opposed granting independence to either Korea or any other Japanese colony, proposing instead a “greater nationalism” [大国民主義] that comprised the whole of Japan’s empire.

A second important contradiction in Nakano’s thinking was that, though he recognized how Japan’s actions *vis-à-vis* China and other Asian nations could only antagonize them, he was nevertheless surprised when representatives of these countries expressed their disappointment, antagonism or even hostility toward Japan. Nakano’s reaction to the Chinese delegation’s appearance at the Paris Peace Conference is but one example. Though he had warned the Japanese political world repeatedly that Japan’s foreign policy (e.g., Katō’s 21 Demands) could only antagonize Chinese nationalist feeling - and though he admitted that “the speeches of the delegates of our ally China ... displayed both the fervor of youth and a passionate love for their country. Secretly I could not help but admiring them.” - he also “found it regrettable that they were not thorough in [their understanding of] the actual situation ... as they suggested ... that all relations between Japan and China since around the Russo-Japanese war were characterized by Japanese aggression.” Conveniently ignoring the conflicts between China and Japan since 1905, Nakano wrote:

“Today it is Japan that according to some dim-witted propagandists should be seen as a militaristic and aggressive country. I am really perplexed by this ... In what state would China be today if, at the time, the Japanese people had not risen for the sake of peace and humanity? ... Why does China demand the return of only those rights gained by Japan since 1897? If they are generally demanding the return of all rights, why don’t they point to Hong Kong too?”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference” [講和会議を目撃して], (Tokyo, 1919), p. 73-75. Nakano expressed similar ideas Ibid. p. 86-89.

Paradoxically, Nakano - who usually was first to criticize Japan's foreign policy - came to its defense when Japan was criticized by China, Korea or other nations.

With these ideas Nakano entered politics.

## Chapter 3: Nakano and the Liberal Twenties

### Introduction

For Nakano, the decade following his entry into politics in 1920 was one of political progress and personal advancement. Known commonly as the era of Taishō democracy, these years saw the realization of some political aims that Nakano had long advocated and sought to achieve. Constitutional government, which for Nakano meant party cabinets, seemed to become firmly established with the 1924 cabinet of Katō Kōmei, which also passed universal suffrage.

Nakano's own career also progressed positively and can be seen as a slow if steady move from the political fringe to the center. As a new parliament member, Nakano first joined a group of unaffiliated MPs, then a small party led by his mentor, Inukai Tsuyoshi, before finally entering the Kenseikai (later renamed Minseitō) - one of the two large established parties in 1924 - just as this party formed the Katō Kōmei cabinet. Once inside the party, he rose relatively quickly through the ranks to become head of its propaganda bureau. He was rewarded for his services with positions in the administration, becoming first parliamentary councilor in the Ministry of Finance in 1927, and in 1929 parliamentary vice-minister of Communications, a position he held for 18 months. By the decade's end, Nakano was a well-known political figure, of whom many expected an ascent to minister of state and perhaps more. Nakano's private life, too, was by and large happy and characterized by material progress.

This is not to say that the 1920s were all roses for Nakano. He suffered personal tragedies, such as his father's death and losing his leg due to a botched surgery. Politically, too, there were setbacks and failures. Nakano had entered politics with the idealistic hope of reforming the political system through a popular mass party. Accordingly, during his first term, he took a pro-Soviet stance, hoping to use Russia as a rallying point of popular (i.e. labor) sentiment and support. The move, however, alienated his Fukuoka constituency and spurred him to switch

strategy after he almost lost an election. In 1924, he joined the Kenseikai, a move which by many was seen as a necessary compromise with the realities of power; others, however, saw it as a betrayal of Nakano's deepest ideals. Within the Kenseikai, Nakano's advance was thwarted by the bureaucratic faction. Frustrated, Nakano left the party at the end of 1931.

The greatest source of his political dissatisfaction was Japan's role in international affairs. The Anglo-American Powers, for one thing, continued cementing what Nakano perceived as an unfair global order through a series of international treaties, beginning with Versailles in 1919 and followed by Washington in 1921-2 and London in 1930. Even worse in Nakano's eyes, Japan – rather than becoming a champion of freedom and opposing this unjust international order – became both a bully and servile supporter of the system.

### **Nakano's Election to the Diet**

When in 1920 Premier Hara Kei dissolved the Diet and called a new election, Nakano immediately began planning a campaign, his second after the botched 1917 effort. Several factors worked in his favor this time: First, Genyōsha president Tōyama had convinced Miyagawa Ikkan not to run, meaning Nakano enjoyed the undivided support of voters who wished to be represented by a Fukuoka native (the only other candidate, the incumbent Matsunaga, hailed from Nagasaki). Second, the tax requirement for voter qualification had been lowered in the intervening years, broadening the electoral base. Nakano took advantage of this more-inclusive political playing field by relying more on mass-targeting activities such as rallies and newspaper ads than on the traditional campaign tactic of visiting individual voters' homes (and buying their votes with money<sup>1</sup>). Matsunaga also experimented with mass tactics but could not match

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning the custom of politicians to visit individual homes to buy votes, see Kojima Kazuo [古島一雄], "Reminiscences of an old politician" [一老政治家の回想], (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron-sha, 1951), p. 107-109.

Nakano's reliance on the press.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Nakano received help from Inukai Tsuyoshi, Baba Tsunego and many others, who supported him by endorsing him either in their writings or speeches (often traveling all the way to Fukuoka to speak on his behalf).

Even before election day, many expected Nakano to win, but the strength of his victory came as a surprise – even to Nakano himself. After the votes were cast on May 10, 1920, the count showed Nakano with 2,596 votes, giving him a lead of 879 votes over Matsunaga. This election was Matsunaga's last. He left politics for good, devoted himself to a successful business career and later supported Nakano's political activities financially. For Nakano, the election marked the beginning of a lifelong career as a parliamentarian.

### **The Professional and Economic Dimension of Nakano's Life**

From May 1920 until his death, Nakano held – almost without interruption<sup>3</sup> - a seat in the Diet. Parallel to that he continued his journalistic work, writing for various Japanese outlets and publishing his own magazines (*Tōhōjiron* until 1923, *Gakan* [我観] between 1923 and 1936 and thereafter *Tōtairiku* [東大陸]). In 1928, Nakano also became president of the *Kyūshū Daily News* [九州日報], successor of the Genyōsha's organ, *Fukuryō Nippō* [福陵新報], a position he held until 1940 when the paper was bought by the *Yomiuri Shimbun*.<sup>4</sup>

Journalism and politics were complementary activities. Writing let Nakano reach a large

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<sup>2</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> The only interruption was between spring of 1939 when Nakano voluntarily resigned from his seat in the Diet and February 1942 when he was reelected. See chapter five.

<sup>4</sup> Founded in 1887 by Tōyama as the Genyōsha's organ, the paper had declared bankruptcy in 1927-8 after seeing its advertisement income dwindle in the course of the Shōwa financial crisis. Unwilling to give up the paper, its employees had gathered capital and continued its operation inviting Nakano to act as president. Busy with his own projects in Tokyo, Nakano often left the day-to-day management of the paper to one of his followers. See Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 462-64.

audience, and his name recognition became a valuable asset when popular masses appeared on the Japanese political stage following the introduction of universal suffrage. Having control over the *Kyūshū Daily News*, one of two daily papers in Fukuoka city, also gave Nakano a vehicle to influence public opinion in his electoral district, which turned out to be a great advantage in election campaigns.<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary office, meanwhile, provided Nakano a stipend high enough for a life free of financial worries; plenty of time when the Diet was not in session to travel, read, research, and write; and access to important personalities in Japan as well as abroad.<sup>6</sup> Such was the basic structure of Nakano's professional life from 1920 on.

Within this framework, there were of course continuities and discontinuities. Motivated by a desire to gather first-hand information about overseas developments, he continued to travel regularly – to Korea and Manchuria in 1920; to China, Manchuria and Siberia in 1925. Such trips yielded, as they had in the past, material for subsequent writings and speeches. Nakano continued to be a prolific and successful writer, publishing some three dozen books (and many pamphlets) in his remaining 23 years, bringing his lifetime total to over 40. Simultaneously, he published about one article a month (less in the late 1920s, more in the 1930s).

He was less successful as a magazine manager. After Higashi resigned from the Tōhōjiron-sha presidency due to ill health in September 1918, Nakano assumed managerial duties.<sup>7</sup> Combined with the responsibilities of his Diet seat, magazine management proved overwhelming. When the paper's financial situation started deteriorating amid the Japanese economy's post-WW1 downturn, Nakano tried keeping the magazine afloat with his private money. In 1922, however, he handed the management reins over to Hayashi Shizuo [林静夫].

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<sup>5</sup> The other daily paper in Fukuoka was the Seiyūkai-affiliated *Fukuoka Daily* [福岡日日] which on occasion carried articles critical of Nakano.

<sup>6</sup> As a member of the lower house Nakano received 3,000 Yen p.a. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 359.

The magazine's finances continued deteriorating, giving birth to the idea of combining *Tōhōjiron* with Miyake Setsurei's *Japan and the Japanese*, but it was not until the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923 destroyed the offices of both magazines that the merger was actually carried out.<sup>8</sup> The entity that emerged in October 1923 was the magazine *Gakan* [我観], meaning "Our Views" or "My Views." Nakano's responsibilities within the magazine varied with time. He often contributed articles, but when necessary also acted as editor, manager or fundraiser.

### Private Life

Thanks to Nakano's income from writing, publishing and serving as an MP, his family enjoyed a lifestyle that, by the standards of the day, was wealthy if not elite. Goods that for average Japanese would become affordable only during the post-WW2 era's economic boom - such as a radio, a gramophone, a French-made car, and regular dinners at Western restaurants - became part of Nakano's private life during the 1920s.<sup>9</sup>

In the years following his return from England, Nakano's family grew steadily. Between 1918 and 1922 three more sons - Yūshi, Tatsuhiko and Yasuo - were born, making Nakano the proud father of four boys.<sup>10</sup> As before, Nakano took care of his parents as well as his younger siblings. In addition, the family also employed up to three maids and one driver, and offered room and board to a number of students. All heads counted, there were anywhere between 12 and 17

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<sup>8</sup> When the earthquake hit Tokyo on September 1, 1923, Nakano was on his way to work and immediately turned around to look after his family, which was unhurt. Some people from Fukuoka living in Tokyo had been less fortunate and the Nakano family offered shelter to as many as possible of those who had been rendered homeless in the disaster. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 367-68.

<sup>9</sup> For a description of the family's consumption patterns see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1 p. 458-60.

<sup>10</sup> Of his four sons, the first two Katsuaki (1914 – 1931) and Yūshi [雄志] (1918 – 1933) were to die in accidents before their father. The other two, Tatsuhiko [達彦] (1920 -?) and Yasuo [泰雄] (1922 - ?) survived their father. While little is known of Tatsuhiko except that he worked as Ogata Taketora's secretary after the war (see Ogata, p. 263), Yasuo later became professor at Waseda University and wrote several books about his father.

people living under Nakano's roof during the 1920s and 30s.<sup>11</sup>

To accommodate all these people, the family in 1918 moved into a house in Harajuku, financing the move with money borrowed from Takagi Rikurō of the Mitsui Zaibatsu. Following Nakano's electoral victory in 1920, he was able to repay Takagi's loan and henceforth owned his own home, which in the course of the 1920s expanded repeatedly, growing to twice its original size by the decade's end. The family lived in the Harajuku house until 1932, when they moved one final time to nearby Yoyogi.

The only truly tragic event in this otherwise happy tableau was the loss of Nakano's leg in 1926.<sup>12</sup> Hopeful of losing the ugly scars left by previous operations and assured by his doctor Sumita Masao<sup>13</sup> that cosmetic surgery would preserve his leg and he would be scar-free within three weeks, Nakano decided to undergo surgery in the first half of 1926. The operation miscarried, leaving his leg with insufficient blood flow and causing it to rot from the toes upward. Encouraged by his doctor and with the help of increasingly strong opiates, Nakano struggled for some weeks hoping to save his limb, but when the pain became unbearable, he asked a second doctor, Maeda Tomosuke,<sup>14</sup> to amputate the leg above the knee.

Nakano took the blow stoically. He did not blame the doctor responsible nor did he ever regret his decision to undergo surgery. Jokingly, he told his friend Ogata that the missing leg provided him with an excellent excuse to skip boring social events, for he now could claim that his injury made sitting for long periods of time difficult.<sup>15</sup> For the rest of his life, he wore a

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<sup>11</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 407-8.

<sup>12</sup> Nakano provides a personal account of the operation in Nakano Seigō, "Hold on, Father" [シッカリシロ・チチ], in *Chūō-kōron* [中央公論], August 1933, republished in "Expressions of the Soul" [魂を吐く], (Tokyo, May, 1938), p. 312 and following.

<sup>13</sup> Sumita Masao [住田正雄] (1878 – 1946), medical doctor.

<sup>14</sup> Maeda Tomosuke [前田友助] (1887 -1975), medical doctor.

<sup>15</sup> See Ogata, p. 32 – 33.



prosthesis and walked with a stick, neither of which kept him from practicing *jūdō* and *sumō*, participating in brawls, or taking up horseback riding in 1932, a sport at which he excelled in various tournaments.<sup>16</sup>

Losing his leg, especially the many weeks of intense pain, made Nakano re-evaluate his life. According to his own account he came out of the experience resolved to pay more attention to his family, even if this meant giving up politics. His resolve, however, was not very strong and before long he returned to political life with the same devotion he had shown in the past.

### **The Student Dorm: Yūkō-kyo**

Nakano continued offering students room and board, and to this end built a dormitory annexed to his house in the spring of 1921. Called “Yūkō-kyo” [猶興居],<sup>17</sup> the dormitory housed about five students at any given time. Admission to the dorm was informal: Of the 50-some students who stayed with Nakano over the years, many were distant family members or relatives of friends and mentors, while others arrived at Nakano’s doorstep with little but a letter of introduction. Hasegawa Shun<sup>18</sup>, who had no prior connection to Nakano and came to Tokyo in 1929 with nothing but a basket containing all his belongings, secured a room after a short informal talk. Nakano explained his motives to Hasegawa:

“The reason I have decided to offer board to students such as yourself is that I did not want to use the compensation I receive for lecturing for my own private purposes, but much rather prefer to see it used for your expenses. When, during my lecturing tours

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<sup>16</sup> See Ogata, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> According to Nakano the name was derived from a saying by Mencius, to wit : “A heroic warrior will rise even without the King of Wen” [豪傑の士は文王なしと雖も猶興る]. When boarding students asked him what it meant, he explained that “Even though your teacher [i.e. Nakano himself?] is stupid, at least one of you should turn out to be great!” See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 314.

<sup>18</sup> Hasegawa Shun [長谷川峻] (1912 - ?), journalist, politician and one of Nakano’s followers.

through the countryside, I see a young student burning with the desire to study, I offer him a place here. Even if this means I will have to face some financial difficulties at times, it does not really matter to me.”<sup>19</sup>

In some cases, Nakano offered free boarding, and if students could not afford their school fees, Nakano would also pay those, providing lucky students with an all-round scholarship to complete their education.

At least two considerations motivated Nakano’s generosity toward students. First, offering lodging to students was a way to return favors to and cement relationships with mentors, patrons and supporters. Among the students who lived in Nakano’s dorm we find not only Shintō Kazuma<sup>20</sup> - the son of Genyōsha founder Shintō Kiheita, who ran Nakano’s constituency organization in Fukuoka<sup>21</sup> - and Shibata Tokuo, the nephew of Nakano’s former Chinese teacher<sup>22</sup>, but also the cousin of the nurse who had cared for Nakano at Kyūshū hospital.<sup>23</sup>

Nakano’s second motivating factor was the belief, doubtless influenced by the example of Kaneko Sessai’s academy at Dalian, that education should be accessible to all members of society. In 1919 Nakano wrote:

“Soon education will only be for the children of rich families, while the offspring from anywhere below the middle will be denied access at the school’s gate. The progress of civilization, however, does not pause a single day. Compared to the farmers of nowadays, the farmer of the future will be required to have modern knowledge. The carpenter who today can hold a hammer, in the future will have to be able to operate

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<sup>19</sup> The conversation is recorded in Hasegawa Shun [長谷川峻] “The Master and the Yūkō-kyō” [先生と猶興居], in “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], eds. Seigō-kai [正剛会], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954), p. 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Shintō Kazuma [進藤一馬] (1904 - 1992), later became mayor of Fukuoka.

<sup>21</sup> See Oates, p. 25 and p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Shibata Tokuo [柴田徳雄] was the nephew Shibata Fumishiro.

<sup>23</sup> Noguchi Kiyoshi [野口清] was cousin to Yukiko Noguchi, Nakano’s teenage love and nurse at Kyūshū University Hospital. See Nakano Yasuo. vol. 1, p. 390.

sophisticated machinery. If education is limited to the descendents of the upper classes, then the children of the middle classes and lower classes will not grow up to become sound workers.”<sup>24</sup>

Though Nakano offered students generous help, he did not spoil them. He served bland food and expected students to take on some household chores. Most were minor, such as walking the dog or clipping newspaper articles when Nakano was absent from Tokyo,<sup>25</sup> but some students got actively involved in supporting Nakano’s political activities. Kanematsu Naoki, who had been Kaneko Sessai’s student, accompanied and supported Nakano during the 1924 election campaign, giving speeches on Nakano’s behalf.<sup>26</sup> While staying at the dorm, Shintō Kazuma accompanied Nakano on his 1925 trip to Siberia, Manchuria and Northern China; after graduation he became Nakano’s secretary. Nagata Masayoshi<sup>27</sup> worked first as a journalist after graduating from University, but later became actively involved in Nakano’s fascist party.

### **Voyage to Korea and Manchuria**

Nakano’s 1920 voyage to Manchuria and Korea followed a now-familiar pattern. Nakano put the impressions gained abroad on paper; originally published as a series of 51 articles in Tokutomi’s *Kokumin Shimbum*, Nakano’s descriptions were so popular that they were subsequently published as a book, entitled “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “Opening Article”[巻頭], in *Tōhōjiron*, October 1919, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 278.

<sup>25</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 487-88.

<sup>26</sup> Kanematsu Naoki [兼松直木] died of Typhus while still living with the Nakano’s in February 1925. Nakano seems to have formed unusually close ties with Kanematsu and held a long at his funeral. See Nakano Seigō, “Yūkō-kyo and Kanematsu Naoki” [猶興居と兼松直木] in “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く], Tokyo, 1938, p. 301 and following.

<sup>27</sup> Nagata Masayoshi [永田正義] (1911 - ?), journalist, and Nakano’s political followers.

<sup>28</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea” [満鮮の鏡に映じて], (Tokyo, Tōhōjiron-sha, March 1921). One of the fondest readers of Nakano’s travel

Nakano arrived in Korea about 18 months after the violent rebellions that engulfed the Korean peninsula in the spring of 1919 had put an end to Governor General Terauchi's harsh rule, which Nakano had criticized as an *Asahi* correspondent in 1913-4. Terauchi was succeeded by the moderate Navy admiral Saitō Makoto,<sup>29</sup> who strove to replace Terauchi's "militarism" with "civility."<sup>30</sup> Nakano welcomed the shift in colonial policy,<sup>31</sup> but as he traveled through Korea he identified a different, deeper threat to peace in Korea: Japanese racism toward the Koreans, which he called "mean thinking of the Japanese people" [卑劣思想].<sup>32</sup> The crux of this problem lay not with the colonial administration but with Japanese expatriates who demanded a return to iron-fisted suppression of Korea and whose "rudeness .... and nastiness surprised and disillusioned"<sup>33</sup> Nakano:

"The shadow of the haggard Yamato people is cast over Korea and Manchuria. ... The rebels are not in the mountains. They have hidden inside the hearts of our decadent compatriots. The most urgent task in our policy today is not that of suppressing rebellion ... We have to polish the mirror inside our hearts that enables us to see the demon [省魔境] and instead of doing away with dangerous thought, we should do away with mean thought. ... The corruption of Japan's politics is nowhere better visible than in Korea. It has made the Japanese residents there mean in their thought."<sup>34</sup>

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descriptions was Tokutomi Sohō, who wrote: "Nakano-san, I have read with great respect your 'Reflections in the Mirror of Korea and Manchuria.' It was the first thing I would read when opening the People's Paper every morning. ... With respect to East Asian questions, you represent the heart of the Japanese and for that I thank you. Your observations are not commonplace. They are [a class] apart from the ordinary arguments, and filled with a fresh and true spirit. ... Even someone who is not moved by the argument will still be moved by your style. I will have both friends and foes read this." Letter from Tokutomi Sohō to Nakano Seigō quoted in Inomata, p. 170

<sup>29</sup> Saitō Makoto [斎藤実] (1858-1936), navy officer, politician and later Prime Minister.

<sup>30</sup> For concise assessment of Saitō's policies see Andrew Gordon, "A Modern History of Japan" (New York, 2003), p. 178.

<sup>31</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea", p. 111 and p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> Nakano elaborates the concept of "mean thinking" in *Ibid.*, p. 1-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

Nakano believed the origins of Japan's "mean thinking" had to be sought within an education system that "demand[ed] submission to special authorities, while respect and love for human beings are not established."<sup>35</sup> Such schooling produced an attitude Nakano described as "worship of the powerful" [事大主義]<sup>36</sup> and contempt for the weak. Domestically, Nakano found the terrible consequence of this attitude was "the absolutism of the political parties who cater to the privileged classes."<sup>37</sup> In international affairs the consequences were even worse, as the Korean population was being antagonized by the contemptuous and racist "attitude of the entire Japanese people, whom I cannot help but consider cowards."<sup>38</sup> Pointing out that the uprisings in Korea had been inspired by the principle of national self-determination included in US President Wilson's 14 points, Nakano wrote:

"The slogan of humane justice [正義人道] that the hypocritical Wilson from America advocates has caused a sensation among the small nations of the world, even though it is only a word. Think how powerful humane justice is if only the sound of the words have so much influence. If Japan were to seriously live up to this ideal in Asia, the hearts of the people of China, Russia, and Korea would – like splinters of iron drawn to a magnet – race to be the first to join us under our flag."<sup>39</sup>

"Mean thinking," by contrast, had caused the adoption of a "conservative servile diplomacy"<sup>40</sup> that antagonized the people of Asia and, ironically, drove them into America's arms. Nakano saw "the independence movement of the Korean people [as] a crystallization of their

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>36</sup> For Nakano's explanation of the concept see Ibid., p. 5 and following.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

contempt and hatred against Japan”<sup>41</sup> and, increasingly, saw a similar pattern unfolding with regard to Japan’s relations with China. Nakano quoted Sun Yat-sen saying: “It was the Japanese who taught the Chinese about anti-Japanese movements ... For they [the Japanese] will threaten the Chinese by shaking their fists, but when England or America scolds them, they will retreat with their tails between their hind legs’.”<sup>42</sup>

Unless Japan succeeded in “reforming the heart of the Japanese,” Governor General Saitō’s cultural rule would remain the “frivolous talk of bureaucrats.”<sup>43</sup> As the title of his account implied, Nakano hoped it would serve as a mirror that would cause the Japanese people to reflect and reform. He put forward numerous proposals. Fundamentally, he demanded that the Japanese educational system teach different values, with the aim of “establishing respect for oneself and for others.”

With regard to the more immediate question of dealing with Korea’s nationalism and drive for independence, however, Nakano remained opposed. While Nakano heard and respected the calls for granting Korea independence from among Japanese intellectuals - notably Yoshino Sakuzō but also Nakano’s mentor Kaneko Sessai as well as his friend Ogata Taketora<sup>44</sup> – he himself rejected the notion on the grounds that granting independence to Korea would only invite another Power to occupy the abandoned territories and enslave the population. For military strategic reasons, he believed that fighting Western imperialism meant Japan had to maintain control of Korea, Taiwan and other colonies, even if Korea’s strong anti-Japanese sentiment

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Sun Yat-sen quoted in Ibid., p. 5-6.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> For Japanese intellectuals favoring Korean independence see Andrew Gordon “A Modern History of Japan”, (New York, 2003) p. 179. For Kaneko’s views see Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 145. Ogata formulated his policy recommendations for Korea in “The Korean Question in the Context of Global Trends”, in *Tōhōjiron* September 1922.

would make it more a liability than an asset in any military conflict.<sup>45</sup> Instead, Nakano proposed a compromise according to which Koreans should be made full-fledged citizens of the Japanese empire, enjoying the same rights as the citizens of the Japanese homeland [一視同仁の同化政策].<sup>46</sup> Once they were full-fledged citizens of the empire they would be invested in it and become pillars of its support, rather than trying to break away from it.

#### **Nakano's Position Outside the Established Parties, 1920-4**

Unlike many of his contemporaries, who entered politics by affiliating themselves with one of the two major established parties, Nakano hoped from the start to establish a new political party based on popular support, and thus to reform Japan's political system. This ambition – which could also properly be labeled a dream in that it was born of Nakano's idealism and would remain unrealized – was a constant and recurring element in Nakano's political career. One of Nakano's earliest articulations of this ambition came in an article published in the fall of 1920:

“Ever since witnessing parliamentary politics, I cannot help but hope for the birth of a healthy party. ... This party of the future must be different from the traditional parties in its structure. ... In the case of the parties of the past, the leaders gathered money, with which they created an electoral base [地盤] and raised their followers. From now onward, parties will be organized by the people themselves. Those involved will each contribute a little money and with that send a representative to the Diet. They ... will finance the work and activities of the party members with their contributions. While the established parties ... collude with a politically interested businessman to raise the party's funds ... the new party based upon the people must [rely] ... on the efforts and contributions – however small they may be - of individual party members. Instead of colluding with one or two businessmen and using three or four persons of great wealth, one will have a steadier base of support by far if one addresses the masses in requesting efforts and sacrifices ... I must renew the stagnant air of the political world and add a

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<sup>45</sup> Taking stock of the first ten years of the Taishō period in the January 1921 issue of *Tōhōjiron*, Nakano wrote with respect to Japan's colony in Korea: “In today's situation the 17 million people of Korea will be of no help for Japan in case of an emergency. Quite the opposite, they would be a cumbersome weight.” Nakano quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 312.

<sup>46</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Korea and Manchuria”, p. 135-37.

new popular axis to the party movement.”<sup>47</sup>

Accordingly, Nakano preferred, at least initially, to remain unaffiliated. In January of 1921, he and other unaffiliated parliament members formed the Mushozoku Club [無所属倶楽部, lit. the “Unaffiliated Club”]. This, however, did not change the fact that Nakano continued to exist on the fringes of political power, a vantage point from which mustering support for any given position within the Diet was frustratingly difficult.

Nakano launched his first attempt to create a new kind of mass party while still a member of the Mushozoku Club. His effort spawned the extra-parliamentary Yūshin-sha [又新社], a society Nakano established with some fellow-Tōhōkai members during the summer of 1922.<sup>48</sup> The society’s platform, written by Nakano, demanded that “the people must become the driving power of reform” and aimed to “form a group that will become the core of a popular movement.” To this end, the society “called out to interested youths throughout the country” and sought “contacts with like-minded people from all corners of society.”<sup>49</sup> The Yūshin-sha also organized lecture tours throughout Japan, during which Nakano, Baba Tsunego, Miyake Setsurei, Mitsukawa Kametarō, and others spoke on foreign policy (mostly Russian affairs) and tried – largely unsuccessfully – to recruit local members.<sup>50</sup> The Yūshin-sha’s lukewarm reception and the fact that every motion Nakano introduced into the Diet up to then had been rejected likely spurred him, in the fall of 1922, to make a first step toward the political mainstream by

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<sup>47</sup> Nakano Seigō “The New Axis of the New Political Movement” [新政治運動の新軌軸], in *Tōhōjiron*, September 1920, p. 2-24.

<sup>48</sup> The society’s members included fellow Tōhōkai members such as Masumoto Uhei [榊本卯平], Miki Yorinobu [三木喜延], Mitsukawa Kametarō [満川亀太郎], Kazami Akira [風見章], and Nakano himself. The society’s headquarters were in the offices of the Tōhōjiron-sha. See Nakano Yasuo vol. 1, p. 338-42.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 339.

<sup>50</sup> See Nakano Yasuo. vol. 1. p. 342.



participating in the founding of the Kakushin Club [革新倶楽部 literally “Innovation Club”], a parliamentary party led by his mentor Inukai Tsuyoshi. If Nakano had hoped to move closer to power by joining the party, the outcome must have disappointed him. While Nakano could congratulate himself in the fall of the following year, when Inukai accepted a ministerial position in the Yamamoto cabinet, on belonging to a government party and having some indirect influence on policy through Inukai, the bills Nakano himself introduced into the Diet continued to be rejected.<sup>51</sup> Nakano’s hope to use the Kakushin Club as a platform to create a new popular party was equally frustrated. Though the Club’s manifesto stated that “the Club will ... link up with the masses of the realm, overthrow the established parties and renew the political world,”<sup>52</sup> most of its members had no intention of establishing new mass-based sources of power, let alone of giving up their traditional power bases. Half a year after its inception, Nakano complained that the Club had been created to reform the political world and “break the status quo, yet was already in need of being reformed itself.”<sup>53</sup>

### **The 1917-Revolution, the Siberian Intervention, and Soviet Russia**

Of all the political questions with which Nakano concerned himself in the years 1917-25, Russia received the most time and energy. The Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the establishment of a communist regime and the exit of the greatest land-powers from the war posed a double challenge to Japan and its allies. On a strategic-military level, the collapse of the Russian front threatened the Entente Powers fighting Germany and Austria, in that the latter could transfer

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<sup>51</sup> Nakano hope to influence policy indirectly was expressed in Nakano Seigō “What the People Expect from Lord Yamamoto Gombei, Mr. Gotō and Mr. Inukai” [国民の期待する所 — 山本権兵衛伯と後藤氏と犬養氏], in *Gakan* [我観], October 1923.

<sup>52</sup> The Club’s program and founding manifesto can be found in *Tōhōjiron*, May 1923, and Inomata, p. 182 as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 335-6.

<sup>53</sup> Nakano Seigō, “From Contraction to Expansion” [緊縮より暢展へ], in *Tōhōjiron*, August

troops from the eastern front to the West and bring them to bear against England, France and the US. Ideologically, the Russian revolution, and the Soviet regime that emerged from it, also posed a political challenge to the capitalist world.

The Entente Powers reacted by launching what soon came to be known as the Siberian Intervention, supporting White Russian counter-revolutionary governments in the hope of wiping out the Bolshevik regime. While Prime Minister Terauchi hesitated, the succeeding Hara administration decided to participate and by the end of 1918 more than 70,000 Japanese troops were operating in Siberia. Efforts to overthrow the Bolshevik regime, however, failed. White Russian admiral Kolchak's regime, supported by the Western Powers, collapsed in the summer of 1919. General Grigory Semyonov's regime, which was backed by Japan, followed suit as soon as Japan withdrew its support. Unlike the Western Powers, who had all but withdrawn their troops from Siberia by the end of 1920, Japan maintained a military presence there for another two years, actually increasing troop levels in response to a massacre against six hundred Japanese at Nikolayevsk (March – May 1920) and extending its occupation to include northern Sakhalin. While the bulk of Japan's forces were withdrawn by October 1922, Japan did not resume diplomatic relations with Russia or withdraw its last troops from northern Sakhalin until 1925. Nakano supported the Russian revolutionary forces from the outset and opposed any plan to intervene there militarily. His position was not based on a thorough understanding of Bolshevik ideology, practices or activities; at least initially, Nakano knew little of Bolshevism.<sup>54</sup> As late as January 1918, he wrote that the Bolshevik ideology was “socialism close to anarchism” and that the October Revolution was a liberal-nationalistic revolution like the one that had shaken France

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1923, quoted in Inomata p. 192.

<sup>54</sup> While his understanding of the Bolshevik ideology and movement was shallow, Nakano was surprisingly accurate in gauging the relevance of the events unfolding in Russia. Nakano wrote: “The Russia revolution will cause wide-reaching changes in the political structure of nations in the 20th century.” Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: The Fortieth Session in Dull Atmosphere” [時論：第四十議会の惰気], in *Tōhōjiron*, February 1918, p.19-21.

some hundred years earlier.<sup>55</sup> At this stage, Nakano's support sprang from spontaneous emotional solidarity with the Russian people, whom Nakano believed to "have gladly gathered around [Lenin] because he deplored the despotism of the Czarist regime and showed empathy with the people."<sup>56</sup>

Accordingly, Nakano opposed Japan's military intervention. As early as October 1917, Nakano stated categorically: "We should not forget that sending troops at the request of a foreign nation is a taboo."<sup>57</sup> He repeated his opposition to intervention regularly thereafter.<sup>58</sup> When the government dispatched troops anyway, the national debate about intervention, and Nakano's argument against it, became more specific and sophisticated.

In the early stages of Russia's revolution, Japan's internal debate revolved around whether Lenin was a German spy on his way to becoming a German puppet (hence opening the possibility of placing Russia's resources in the hands of Germany's war machine). Nakano calmed the alarmists, stating: "Lenin is certainly not a Germany spy but a champion of the Russian extremism. Lenin has received support from the German government ...but the Russian people do not follow him because he has received support from Germany."<sup>59</sup>

After Germany's surrender in November 1918, Japan's interventionist argument shifted to focus on Russia's political instability and the threat it posed to Japan. Nakano sympathized with

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<sup>55</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: Precipitate Warnings before the Fact" [時論：事前の警告戒輕拳] in *Tōhōjiron*, January 1918, p. 2-21.

<sup>56</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Opening Article" [巻頭] in *Tōhōjiron*, February 1918 issue, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 245.

<sup>57</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: The Belligerent Powers' Ability to Persevere and Calculate" [時論評論：交戦列国の耐久力と打算力], in *Tōhōjiron*, October, 1917, p. 2 – 21.

<sup>58</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōhōjiron*, March 1918 and Nakano Seigō, "Shallow Diplomacy and Humiliating Expeditions" [浅慮外交屈辱出兵], in *Tōhōjiron*, July 1918, p.19-36.

<sup>59</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Opening Article" [巻頭] in *Tōhōjiron*, February 1918, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 245.

the desire to bring law and order to Russia but stated clearly that taking such a position was “not the same as arguing that Lenin’s regime should be annihilated.”<sup>60</sup> While Nakano had by this point become critical of Lenin’s regime - calling the Russian leader a ruthless “autocrat more despotic than Peter the Great” - he did not think that either the Russian aristocracy or the various puppets propped up by the Powers posed viable alternatives.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, he wanted to “quickly end [Japan’s] support of the Semyonov regime.”<sup>62</sup>

Nakano addressed the interventionists’ fear that a Communist Russian regime might encourage the spread of radical thought across the Japanese empire in his first-ever speech before the Diet. He argued that “radical thought does not originate in Russia” but arose instead from injustices internal to Japanese society.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, radical thought could not be fought with bayonets, but only by addressing inequalities within Japan. Speaking again before the Diet on the question of recognizing Soviet Russia in 1922, Nakano added that “not interacting [with Russia] out of fear of [radical] thought is nonsense” because “when followed to its final conclusion [this argument] would bring us back to the seclusion policy adopted by Japan in antiquity.”<sup>64</sup> Positioning himself against those who would try in vain to insulate Japan from global intellectual currents, Nakano suggested a new perspective on Russian communism, one according to which it could be seen as a social experiment from which Japan could learn important lessons:

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<sup>60</sup> Nakano Seigō, , “The Responsibility for the Failed Siberian Policy and a Basic Counter Policy” [西伯利政策失敗の責任と根本的対策], in *Tōhōjiron*, July, 1920, p. 2 – 20.

<sup>61</sup> Nakano’s dismissal of the Semyonov regime supported by Japan can be found in *Ibid.*, p. 2 – 20.

<sup>62</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōhōjiron*, December 1920.

<sup>63</sup> Nakano Seigō, speech held before the Diet on February 6, 1921. A very similar argument can be found in Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 187

<sup>64</sup> Nakano Seigō, speech in Diet held on March 20, 1923 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 356-57..

“Lenin, the hero, has put the Russian people and territory into a test tube and is conducting a communist experiment. It is not in the interest of outsiders to interfere. ... It is quite all right to watch from the outside. The results of this experiment should contribute to the sciences all over the world. Also the idealists around the world could be woken up by the experiment. ... The Russian government is aware that the experiment they are conducting in Russia has failed and they are gradually reforming Communism.”<sup>65</sup>

While the Western Powers one after another withdrew their troops from Russian soil in the course of 1920, Japan's interventionists sought to make withdrawal conditional on the Soviets paying compensation for the massacre at Nikolayevsk. Nakano's immediate reaction was to propose establishing an investigative committee that would examine the events leading up to the massacre, especially the role of the Japanese army, but the proposal was voted down by the Seiyūkai majority.<sup>66</sup> Two years later, Nakano went further, arguing that responsibility for the massacre lay with Japanese forces; that, accordingly, Japan should withdraw from Sakhalin; and that instead of demanding compensation from Russia Japan itself should pay reparations.<sup>67</sup>

Nakano's opposition to Japan's military intervention in Russia went hand in hand with his position that Japan should recognize the revolutionary regime and open diplomatic relations with Russia.<sup>68</sup> Apart from the fact that most European nations had already recognized the Soviet Union in one way or another and Japan risked being left behind, Nakano's main argument was economic: “For a country such as Japan, which has industry but neither primary raw materials nor

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<sup>65</sup> Nakano's speech in the Diet on March 20, 1923, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 356-57. The same argument can be found in Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 216 ff.

<sup>66</sup> See Nakano Seigō, speech before the 43<sup>rd</sup> extraordinary Diet held on July 9, 1920 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 291-94.

<sup>67</sup> Nakano Seigō, speech in the Diet held March 20, 1923 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 356-57.

<sup>68</sup> Nakano had demanded recognition of the Lenin regime as early as July 1920. See Nakano Seigō, “The Responsibility for the Failed Siberian Policy and a Basic Counter Policy” [西伯利政策失敗の責任と根本的対策], in *Tōhōjiron*, July, 1920, p. 2 – 20.

markets, cooperating with Russia, which has primary resources and markets, is completely in line with economic principles.”<sup>69</sup> Nakano argued, moreover, that a closer relationship with Russia could improve Japan’s position *vis-à-vis* the other Powers, deflecting England’s and America’s “program for control over the world” [英米世界支配のプログラム].<sup>70</sup> Thus motivated, Nakano made recognizing the Soviets the center of his writing and speechmaking in and outside of the Diet in the first half of the 1920s.

### Loss of Political Capital

Nakano’s support for Soviet Russia following the 1917 revolution may be seen as a political victory, as the Japanese government ultimately did withdraw from Siberia and recognize the Soviet regime, if not until 1925. Yet, even if viewed as a victory, the outcome was meager compared to the political capital that Nakano had invested in achieving it. Much of his writing in the *Tōhōjiron* magazine had focused on the Soviet question; the magazine’s June 1923 issue focused entirely on Russia, including essays by authors spanning the entire political spectrum.<sup>71</sup> When Nakano spoke in the Diet, or introduced a bill or motion during his first tenure, it was mostly about Russia.<sup>72</sup> The political society Yūshin-sha, which Nakano launched in the summer

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<sup>69</sup> Nakano’s speech in the Diet on March 20, 1923, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 360.

<sup>70</sup> Nakano quoted taken from Inomata p. 181. The same argument can be found in Nakano Seigō, “The New Path of International Japan” [国際日本の新活路], in *Tōhōjiron*, January, 1922, p. 2 – 33.

<sup>71</sup> Besides the obligatory essay from Nakano and Sugimori this special issue also contained essays by social activist Ōyama Ikuo [大山郁男] (1880 – 1955), socialist Sano Manabu [佐野学] (1892 - 1953), legal scholar Ninagawa Arata [蜷川新] (1873 - 1959), politician Tsurumi Yūsuke [鶴見祐輔] (1875-1973), right-wing activist Ōkawa Shūmei [大川周明], novelist Shirayanagi Shūko [白柳秀湖] (1884-1950) and politician Itō Chiyū [伊藤痴遊] (1867 – 1938). See “Special Issue on the Russo-Japanese question” [日露問題号], *Tōhōjiron* June 1923.

<sup>72</sup> For example, his virgin speech in the Diet of July 9, 1920 demanding the establishment of an committee investigating the events leading up to the massacre at Nikolayevsk, Nakano’s speech given on February 6, 1921 demanding non-interference in Russian affairs and the withdrawal of all Japanese troops, or his speech of March 20, 1923 demanding

of 1922, focused on promoting and normalizing relations with Russia. Yūshin-sha members in 1922 organized a meeting with the Soviet representative in Japan, Antonov, in which they explored the possibility of a rapprochement between the two nations.<sup>73</sup> In the fall of 1922 and the first half of 1923, the society also organized rallies across Japan advocating the recognition of Soviet Russia.

The only real reward Nakano reaped from all these efforts was becoming one of the first Japanese officials to be invited to visit Russia's eastern territories after the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1925.<sup>74</sup> He and his co-travelers, Shintō Kazuma (a boarding student of Nakano's) and interpreter Hirooka Kōchi, received a very warm welcome, as many of Nakano's pro-Soviet articles had been published in the Russian press.<sup>75</sup> The group visited hospitals, mills, sanatoriums, prisons, and other public facilities, and also participated in *sumō* wrestling contests. Overall, they came away with a positive impression of the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup>

Outside of Russia, however, Nakano's efforts were futile to say the least. Not one of the proposals he submitted to the Diet was accepted. When he proposed establishing a committee to

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recognition of the Soviet Union and resumption of diplomatic relations.

<sup>73</sup> The society met with the Soviet representative (since no formal diplomatic relations were established, there was no ambassador), Antonov, on two occasions, namely on August 15 and 18, 1922. The contents of the talks conducted during the meetings were published in *Tōhōjiron* the following month and were rather harmless in terms of content. See Nakano Seigō, "Interview with Antonov" [アントノフと面接して], in *Tōhōjiron*, September 1922.

<sup>74</sup> A description of the trip can be found in Watanabe Yukio [渡部行男], "The Enigma of Nakano Seigō's Suicide" [中野正剛の自決の謎], (Fukuoka, 1996), p. 220-24.

<sup>75</sup> Nakano in a letter dated September 2, 1925 quoted in Inomata p. 198 but also in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 403.

<sup>76</sup> Hirooka Kōchi [広岡光治] who accompanied Nakano as an interpreter on the Russian leg of the journey, recalled Nakano's positive assessment of conditions in the Soviet Union in Hirooka Kōchi, "Nakano Seigō's Visit to the Far East" [中野正剛氏の極東訪問] in *Soviet Studies* [ソ連研究], June 1954, quoted in Inomata p. 198-9.

investigate the Nikolayevsk massacre,<sup>77</sup> Prime Minister Hara Kei dismissed the idea, saying “the days would not be long enough if we were to look into each problem that incidentally arises,”<sup>78</sup> and the motion was blocked by the Seiyūkai majority. The following spring, when Nakano demanded non-interference in Russian affairs and the withdrawal of all Japanese troops from Russia, not one cabinet member was present to listen and the rebuttal was made by the vice-secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The following day’s newspapers reported that many MPs were discussing private matters during Nakano’s speech; the proposal itself was also voted down by the Seiyūkai majority.<sup>79</sup> Finally, when Nakano as a member of the Kakushin Club demanded in March 1923 the speedy recognition of the Soviet Union, the proposal also failed to gain enough votes to pass.<sup>80</sup>

Worse still, Nakano’s pro-Soviet activities also made him a number of important enemies. That his opposition to the Siberian Intervention cost him sympathies among the pro-intervention army hard-liners is understandable. Calling the Army Minister General Tanaka Gi’ichi a “military man of small talent” [小才子軍人]<sup>81</sup> and suggesting that the army general staff officers were generally driven by the hope of “advance[ing] their careers”<sup>82</sup> as well as a psychological

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<sup>77</sup> See Nakano Seigō, speech in the 43<sup>rd</sup> special Diet session, July 9, 1920. Large portions of the speech can also be found in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 291-94.

<sup>78</sup> Hara Kei quoted in Inomata, p. 162.

<sup>79</sup> See Inomata, p. 173.

<sup>80</sup> Nakano’s speech in the Diet of March 20, 1923, is quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 360 and following.

<sup>81</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōhōjiron*, January 1920. On a different occasion he wrote about Tanaka that he was a military man who had lost the *bushidō* [way of the warrior]. See Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 17.

<sup>82</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Shallow Diplomacy and Humiliating Expeditions” [浅慮外交屈辱出兵], in *Tōhōjiron*, August 1918, p. 19 - 36



mind-set of “getting as much as you can” [取れるなら、取ろう]<sup>83</sup> could only make him enemies among the army’s mainstream. Finally, he antagonized moderate and neutral factions within the armed forces by arguing before the Diet that the Japanese army was responsible for the Nikolayevsk massacre. Even among rank-and-file soldiers fighting and freezing in Siberia, Nakano’s stance was noted and much resented. Mitamura Takeo<sup>84</sup>, a soldier who later became a follower of Nakano’s, recalled that:

“At the time we were in Siberia and we listened to Nakano’s opposition to the Siberian intervention with single-minded hatred. To the present day, I cannot forget either the difficult position in which we were placed or the sad return we were given because of his criticism.”<sup>85</sup>

Nakano’s pro-Russian stance would continue to haunt him. It made him vulnerable in political struggles because it left him open to implications and direct claims that his sympathy for Soviet Russia reflected socialist or radical communist beliefs, or, worse still, that he was a Soviet spy. In the 1924 election, Nakano’s opponent played up Nakano’s Russophile activities so convincingly that Nakano almost lost his seat in the Diet.

### **Why Support Communist Russia?**

Why did Nakano continue supporting Communist Russia so energetically despite the obvious political cost? Ideological conviction is not the answer. Though in the year before his death Nakano admitted to his son – with a somewhat embarrassed smile – that he once had

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<sup>83</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Founding Declaration of the Yūshin-sha” [又新社の宣伝], in *Tōhōjiron*, August, 1922.

<sup>84</sup> Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫] (1899 – 1964), police man and politician.

<sup>85</sup> Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刀したか], (Tokyo, 1953).

“almost become a Bolshevik” [おれももう少しでボル公になるところだったよ], and though he admired Lenin’s leadership throughout his life, Nakano never embraced either socialism or communism.<sup>86</sup> Nakano’s understanding of Soviet Russia – which, as we have seen, was shallow at first – deepened quickly and his assessment of communist ideology became increasingly critical. He saw Marxism as a “sort of emotional classic [感情的經典] that stirs the people facing great hardships and makes them carry out a revolution,”<sup>87</sup> adding that there was “nothing as powerful as socialist literature when it comes to stimulating stupid people.”<sup>88</sup>

As early as 1920, Nakano recognized that Lenin’s communist experiment in Russia had failed and stated that “post-revolutionary [Russian] society is certainly not the kind of society the revolutionaries envisioned.”<sup>89</sup> He believed the experiment’s failure sprang from the fact that human beings “cannot work hard from morning till evening for the sake of the public alone. The individual’s wants and desires are best at arousing man’s activity. Any social organization that blocks that will, as a result, kill ingenuity and the desire to make an effort.”<sup>90</sup> Nakano also believed that, by going against human nature, communism required heavy controls and coercion that created bureaucratic authoritarianism: “Those controlling need to be controlled, so that the

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<sup>86</sup> For the quote from the conversation with his son see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 290. For Nakano’s appreciation of Lenin’s leadership abilities toward the end of his life see “War-time Prime Ministers” [戦時宰相論], *Asahi News*, January 1, 1943.

<sup>87</sup> Quote taken from a conversation between Nakano and Chinese warlord Feng Yu-shiang [馮玉祥] (1882-1942) also known as the “Christian general,” whom Nakano met on his trip to China, Manchuria and Russia in the fall of 1925. The conversation is recorded in “The Wanna-be Russian Feng Yu-shiang” [露西亞かぶれの馮玉祥] in Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く], (Tokyo, May, 1938), p. 133.

<sup>88</sup> Nakano Seigō, “From contraction to expansion” [緊縮より暢展へ]; in *Tōhōjiron*, August, 1923, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1. p. 365.

<sup>89</sup> Quote taken from a conversation between Nakano Seigō and Chinese war-lord Feng Yuxian in “The wanna-be Russian Feng Yu-shiang” in Nakano Seigō “Expressions of the Soul”, p. 129.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

whole system suffers to an indescribable extent from the vices of bureaucracy.”<sup>91</sup>

By this time, Nakano’s criticism was also targeted at the Soviet regime and Lenin himself. Even while arguing that Lenin was Russia’s legitimate ruler and encouraging Japan to recognize his regime, from at least 1920 onward Nakano’s view of Lenin’s personality became increasingly harsh. He recognized that while advocating internationalism and world revolution, Lenin had based his power firmly on Russian nationalism and pursued clearly imperialist aims: “He has advocated self-determination of nations, but will not recognize the independence of the nations of the Baltic countries, southern Russia or Siberia. ... People like Lenin have always at one level the strong will to rule other people. The spiritual will to rule others is an imperialist tendency that they have in their heart.”<sup>92</sup> About Lenin’s character Nakano added: “He kills people to control those who are still alive. ... He is an idealistic, moralistic and deliberate despot.”<sup>93</sup>

If neither ideological conviction nor personal adoration for Lenin were the driving forces behind Nakano’s enthusiastic support for Soviet Russia, how else can we account for it? Nakano’s “romantic infatuation with revolution,”<sup>94</sup> which in the past had led him to side with the revolutionary cause in China, was partly responsible, as were his liberalism and his open-minded attitude toward new ideologies. He approached the phenomenon, in part, with intellectual curiosity and scientific detachment, hoping to learn from Russia’s experience. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Nakano did not consider Communism dangerous and believed it could not be suppressed by force.<sup>95</sup> Though convinced that the ideology was fraught with mistakes, he

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p. 134.

<sup>92</sup> Nakano Seigō “New Phenomena and New Personalities” [新現象と新人物] in *Tōhōjiron*, January 1920.

<sup>93</sup> All three quotes taken from Nakano Seigō “New Phenomena and New Personalities” [新現象と新人物] in *Tōhōjiron*, January 1920.

<sup>94</sup> Aochi Shin [青地晨], “Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛], in *Chisei* [知性], February 1955, p. 156

<sup>95</sup> Following the assassination of the socialist activist Takao Heibei [高尾平兵衛] (1895 -

remained confident that “pure reason” was sufficient “to expose Communism’s shortcomings while at the same time pointing out its failures in history.”<sup>96</sup>

Nakano likely also saw political gain in supporting Russia’s revolution. By showing solidarity with a communist Russia, the homeland of workers and farmers, Nakano likely hoped to win the sympathies of Japan’s workers and farmers. Having identified a worldwide trend toward mass political participation, made manifest in the fall of German, Austrian and Russian monarchies; the expansion of suffrage in the Western nations; and the politicization of women and workers in the aftermath of the Great War, Nakano foresaw a similar pattern for Japan.

The question was how to prepare oneself to benefit politically from this turn of events. Since the mass of the people, were workers and farmers, Nakano concluded that industrial laborers would play a pivotal role in the future of Japanese politics. He wrote as much after participating in a rally demanding non-interference in Russia in the summer of 1922. The event, which was organized by student and labor groups, ended in a fistfight between police and organizers:

“The organizers of the rally come either from the Shinjin-kai, the Kyōmin-kai [ both student societies] or some labor group. When you take a closer look at these groups, you see that they are made up of so-called ‘new people’ [新人], leaders of the labor movement, etc. It goes without saying that both groups lean heavily to the left. ... Anyway, as I looked the attitude of these gentlemen, I had no doubt that I was looking at the powerful leaders who would rule the next era of Japan.”<sup>97</sup>

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1923) whom Nakano had known personally, Nakano wrote about the futility of trying to suppress socialist or communist through by force: “In the history of the world, several nations have tried to suppress socialism, and more than on police force has clamped down on it. And yet in spite of all this suppression, socialism has not diminished its force.” Nakano Seigō, “From Contraction to Expansion” [緊縮より暢展へ], in *Tōhōjiron*, August, 1923 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1. p. 365.

<sup>96</sup> Nakano “From Contraction to Expansion” [緊縮より暢展へ]; in *Tōhōjiron*, August, 1923, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1. p. 365.

<sup>97</sup> Quote taken from Nakano Seigō “Founding Declaration of the Yūshin-sha” [又新社の宣伝], *Tōhōjiron*, August, 1922 , quoted in Inomata, p. 178. The rally had been organized by Inamura Ryūichi [稲村隆一] of Waseda University’s Kyōmin-kai [暁民会] and Miwa Jusō [三

Accordingly, Nakano's support of the Russian Revolution and subsequently the Soviet regime were attempts to capitalize on the entrance of the masses onto Japan's political stage. If the reader recalls how Nakano entered politics in 1920 with the aim of creating a new popular mass party, his support of the Russian revolution and the Soviet regime loses its tinge of eccentricity and seems a rather reasonable calculation, even if subsequent events showed it to be premature. It is certainly no coincidence that Nakano's Yūshin-sha society, founded in the summer of 1922 to become "the core of a [Japanese] popular movement," made Russia its central issue.<sup>98</sup> Nor is it a coincidence that Nakano's solidarity with the Soviet Union and the cause of the workers came to an end when, in the course of the 1924 general election, he learned his position did not strengthen his support among the Japanese electorate.

### **General Election of 1924**

Nakano's campaign for re-election on May 10, 1924 turned out to be much harder than that of 1920, yielding a much narrower victory. Nakano beat his opponent, Miyagawa Ikkan, by only 25 votes (2,786 versus 2,761). Afterward, Nakano said: "My expectations were wrong, as I had anticipated an easy campaign but it turned out to be stupidly difficult, and I almost failed to be elected."<sup>99</sup>

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輪寿壮] of Tokyo Imperial University's Sinjin-kai [新人会]. For Inamura's recollection of the event see Inamura Ryūichi [稲村隆一]; "The Ideal of Asian Liberation" [アジア解放の理想], in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], "Nakano Seigō is Alive" [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo, Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954), p. 22-24.

<sup>98</sup> The quotes are taken from Nakano Seigō, "Founding Declaration of the Yūshin-sha" [又新社の宣伝], in *Tōhōjiron*, August, 1922 reproduced in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 339.

<sup>99</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 390.

The main reason behind Nakano's near defeat was his pro-Soviet stance.<sup>100</sup> It cost him the support of Fukuoka hardliners in and around the Genyōsha, who did not wish to be represented by someone concerned more with Russia than Japan and who "seems to believe that his business ends with commenting on politics."<sup>101</sup> The hardliners produced their own candidate, Uchida Ryōhei, Tōyama Mitsuru's nephew and founder of the Kokuryūkai, who, however, withdrew his candidacy and was replaced by Nakano's old-time rival Miyagawa Ikkan two weeks before the election. Though late to the race, Miyagawa was a strong opponent. He had won the sympathies of many by generously surrendering his candidacy to Nakano in the last election. Now, he wasted no time to attacking Nakano's weakest point - his association with left-wing thought and the Soviet Union - by, among other things, running ads in the *Fukuoka Daily News* reading "Miyagawa Ikkan does not try to parrot the radical thought of red Russia."<sup>102</sup>

Though Nakano's position on Russia likely imperiled his campaign, he himself blamed Inukai Tsuyoshi, in particular Inukai's flirtatious rapprochement with the Seiyūkai, which by 1925 led to a merger between the Kakushin Club and the Seiyūkai. Within a month after the 1924 election, Nakano broke with Inukai and left the Kakushin Club. In an open farewell letter, he explained the political strategy underlying his decision:

"In 20 years it could be that a labor party or a socialist party could become strong, but this is not what will save Japan from its present predicament. ... If the Kakushin Club really tried to reform the political world and overthrow the established parties, it would not concern itself with the Diet, but look for success at a later date and take on the color

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<sup>100</sup> This at least is the conclusion of the *Fukuoka Daily News* [福岡日日新聞] post-election editorial of May 14, 1924. The paper had polled the 4<sup>th</sup> graders at a local school what they thought about the two candidates (supposedly this reflected the views of their fathers) and 24 students had answered that they disliked Nakano because "because he helps Russia." See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 380.

<sup>101</sup> Editorial of the *Fukuoka Daily News* [福岡日日新聞] April 25, 1924.

<sup>102</sup> See Miyagawa's Election Advertisement in the *Fukuoka Daily News* [福岡日日新聞], May 9, 1924, also quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 378.

of a labor party. However, the character of our members (including myself) is not suited to this task. In fact, I believe that the Club should try to become an established party by advocating policies similar to those of the established parties.”<sup>103</sup>

Rather than becoming an unaffiliated outsider again, Nakano joined the Kenseikai, one of the two established parties. His decision surprised many onlookers, for immediately after the election he had continued casting himself as a rebel, declaring: “I have set out to destroy all the established political forces in order to enter a new era. ... I believe the Japanese political world is about to see the first act of destruction of the status quo and I shall play an important role in it.”<sup>104</sup> The Seiyūkai-affiliated *Fukuoka Daily News* highlighted the irony that someone who had started his political career opposing the established parties and who only recently had criticized Nagai Ryūtarō for joining the Kenseikai should now do the same.<sup>105</sup> Aware of the contradiction in his decision, Nakano gave a half-baked explanation in the same farewell letter to Inukai. Fundamentally, however, the move was motivated by the hope that membership in a large party would increase his influence.<sup>106</sup> Many years later, Nakano explained his decision to join the Kenseikai quite frankly by saying “even Saigō needed the backing of the Satsuma-han.”<sup>107</sup>

Nakano’s decision to join the Kenseikai not only marked a break with Inukai but also the low point of Nakano’s relations with Tōyama. After Tōyama’s refusal to support Nakano in the last election, joining the Kenseikai may be seen as Nakano’s attempt to wean himself from

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<sup>103</sup> Nakano’s open letter to Inukai, published in *Gakan*, May 1924, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 382.

<sup>104</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Inomata, p. 191

<sup>105</sup> “Nakano Seigō switches to the Kenseikai,” in *Fukuoka Daily News* [福岡日日新聞], May 22, 1924

<sup>106</sup> See Ogata, p. 31.

<sup>107</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata p. 193.

over-dependence on his old mentor.<sup>108</sup> After freeing himself somewhat from Tōyama's grasp, Nakano also grew distant from other Fukuoka figures. Shibata Fumishiro, Nakano's former teacher, remarked after one of Nakano's visits to Fukuoka around 1926-7 how far apart they had grown intellectually.<sup>109</sup>

### **Within the Kenseikai**

Nakano's switch to the Kenseikai was, despite the political complications outlined above, well-timed. On June 11, 1924 Katō Kōmei, president of the Kenseikai, was asked to form the next cabinet. As it happened, this cabinet would play an important role in Japanese inter-war history, not only because it restored party cabinets after a brief re-emergence of transcendental cabinets, but more importantly because it introduced universal suffrage. It was under Katō that Japan entered the full bloom of what later came to be known as "Taishō democracy."

While Nakano could easily identify with the cabinet's program – apart from universal suffrage and recognition of the Soviet Union, it also included reductions of both armaments and public-official head count – he was not welcomed with open arms. His hostile criticism of established parties, as well as the insults he hurled against Katō Kōmei (whom Nakano once called "the incurable disease of the Kenseikai"<sup>110</sup>) still rang freshly in the ears of many members – including Katō's. It was only through the offices of Adachi Kenzō<sup>111</sup> and Nagai Ryūtārō that Nakano was accepted into the party.

Almost by default Nakano joined the Adachi or pure-party faction, which included party

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<sup>108</sup> See Oates, p. 32.

<sup>109</sup> See Shibata Fumishiro [柴田文城], "Memories of Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛君の思い出], (Tokyo, 1968), p. 45.

<sup>110</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōhōjiron*, August 1919, quoted in Inomata p. 193.

<sup>111</sup> Adachi Kenzō [安達謙藏] (1864 - 1948) Politician and leader of the Minseitō faction to which Nakano belonged in the late 1920s.



politicians such as Miki Bukichi<sup>112</sup> and Nagai Ryūtarō and thematically focused on domestic reconstruction (i.e., reform) and the Chinese question. These priorities contrasted sharply with those of the bureaucratic faction led by Egi Tasuku,<sup>113</sup> which was comprised largely of imperial university graduates who served as career bureaucrats before becoming politicians. Roughly speaking, while the party faction bore much of the brunt of political battles (speechmaking, campaigning, etc.), the bureaucratic faction was nevertheless able to secure the best positions within the administration whenever the party was called upon to form a cabinet. During the next half-dozen years that he spent with the Kenseikai (later Minseitō), the friction between these two factions caused Nakano great frustration, and more than anything else it was the bureaucratic faction's rise to pre-eminence after president Hamaguchi Osachi's assassination in late 1930 that caused Nakano to leave the party in 1932.

As a member of the governing party, Nakano found himself in an entirely new and unfamiliar situation. In the past, he had occupied positions that carried neither power nor responsibility, which let him criticize others sharply without becoming much of a target himself. Now he had to tread more carefully. The task was easy enough as long as he agreed with the cabinet's policies, but controlling his tongue sometimes cost him considerable energy and sometimes he could not help himself from speaking out.<sup>114</sup> When the Kenseikai government bundled the passage of the universal suffrage bill together with a Peace Preservation Law meant to contain labor and tenant farmer unrest, Nakano submitted a motion claiming that “the Peace

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<sup>112</sup> Miki Bukichi [三木武吉], (1884 - 1956) politician and occasional ally of Nakano's.

<sup>113</sup> Egi Tasuku [江木翼] (1873 – 1932) bureaucrat and politician. For dynamics within the party see Itō Takashi [伊藤隆], “Research in early Shōwa Political History” [昭和初期政治史研究], (Tokyo 1969), p. 29-31.

<sup>114</sup> Overall, Nakano approved of the party's line and praised the Katō cabinet's passage of universal suffrage and recognition of the Soviet Union. See Nakano Seigō, “The New Value of Friendly Russo-Japanese Relations” [日露親交の新価値], in *Gakan*, March 1925, p. 51.

Preservation Law submitted by the government is contrary to the spirit of the constitution.”<sup>115</sup>

Comparing Nakano’s appearance in the Diet to his former speeches, the *Osaka Asahi News* commented:

“The critic Nakano Seigō, ever since entering a party, has found it rather difficult to say what he wants to say. You can watch his belly swelling [i.e., him getting angry] and it looks as if it is bugging him. ... On the few occasions that he is on his seat in the Diet he shouts things like: ‘Why don’t you leave it at that?’ [いい加減に止めんか?] or ‘I cannot listen to this in silence.’ ... His speeches lack depth and weight. The attacks that he makes against his opponents will split bamboo, but they will not cut their bodies.”<sup>116</sup>

Eventually, however, Nakano settled into his new role within the Kenseikai, overcame any reservations the party’s members may have harbored against him and began his rise through the party’s ranks.

Nakano’s main advantage in the game of politics was his dexterity with words. Roughly speaking, this advantage took two forms: On the one hand, Nakano soon developed into a party ideologue who eventually rose to become director of propaganda [宣伝部長] (what today we might call public relations). In this capacity, he was entrusted with writing the party’s program when it transformed itself into the Minseitō in 1927 and with formulating the party’s strategy during elections. At the same time, Nakano earned the respect of his enemies and the gratitude of his peers by using his oratory skills to cut down political opponents. Parliamentary debate was, then as now, a vicious war of words and Nakano liked being in the thick of it. Two debates that Nakano fought for the Kenseikai - both against the Seiyūkai president and future Prime Minister, Tanaka Gi’ichi - were particularly spectacular.

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<sup>115</sup> Nakano in a declaration submitted together with Kiyose Ichirō and Hoshishima Jirō on February 19, 1925 quoted in Inomata p. 197. See also his speech held in the Diet on February 10, 1925.

<sup>116</sup> *Osaka Asahi News*, March 7, 1925 issue quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 391.

### **Nakano - a Soviet Spy?**

The first clash between Nakano and Tanaka Gi'ichi came toward the end of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Diet session, which lasted from December 1925 to March 1926. Army General and Seiyūkai president Tanaka Gi'ichi had attempted to bribe members of the coalition parties of the Kenseikai government under Katō to withdraw their support and thus bring down the cabinet. Though Tanaka claimed the bribery money came from private sources, rumor suggested it came from booty confiscated in Russia during the Siberian intervention and a secret army fund that, itself, had been created illegally by misappropriating monies from army's operational budget in Siberia.

Nakano fired the opening shot of the vicious mudslinging contest on March 4, 1926, by taking the stand in parliament and calling Tanaka's bribes "the most serious incident since the Siemens scandal."<sup>117</sup> Nakano noted that from 1922-4 Tanaka, then Army Minister, and his vice-minister Yamanashi had spent 800 million Yen on the futile Siberian intervention and, claimed that 40 million of the total had found its way into a secret army fund, where it had been put to nobody-knew-what purpose. Nakano also mentioned the Semyonov gold ingots which, after falling into the Japanese army's hands during the Siberian intervention, had mysteriously disappeared; large bank accounts opened under the names of Tanaka and Yamanashi with various Japanese banks; and, finally, rumors that Tanaka had used part of the proceeds from the sale of the ingots to replace Takahashi Korekiyo as Seiyūkai president.<sup>118</sup> Weaving these rumors together into a comprehensive accusation, Nakano demanded that the questions surrounding the origin of Tanaka's funds and the future Prime Minister's role in obtaining them be investigated.

Tanaka and Yamanashi denied the accusations and the Seiyūkai was up in arms against Nakano. The press described the atmosphere as "filled with the thirst for blood" and anticipated "strong retaliation from the Seiyūkai," warning that "Nakano Seigō's life is in danger as the

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<sup>117</sup> Nakano's speech before the Diet, March 4, 1926 quoted in Inomata p. 207-9.

extra-parliamentary thugs of the Seiyūkai are after him.”<sup>119</sup> Nakano shared these fears and, in the days following his broadside, retained two body guards.<sup>120</sup>

Nakano’s attack on Tanaka took his own party by surprise, because Nakano had not informed his colleagues about the content of his speech beforehand. Army Minister and Kenseikai member Ugaki Kazuo brushed Nakano’s accusations coolly away as “nonsense,” but his diary shows he was upset with Nakano for using the “army to deliver a blow against the[ir] real enemy, the Seiyūkai.”<sup>121</sup> Given Nakano’s lack of support both within and outside of his party, his motion for an investigative committee did not pass.

Outside the Diet, however, Nakano received support from two different sources. First, the press - sensing a scandal in the making - pounced on the news. The day after Nakano’s speech, the Tokyo Asahi’s headline read “Suspicious Rumors Concerning the Disappearance of Four Million Yen During Tanaka’s Tenure Expose Ugly Reality of Chōshū Military Clique in Diet” and the paper’s entire second page, as well as its lead editorial, focused on the topic.<sup>122</sup>

Second, and more importantly for subsequent events, the day after Nakano’s speech, the army’s former paymaster - who had served with Tanaka and Yamanashi - filed accusations of

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<sup>118</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> All quotes taken from Inomata, p. 209-11.

<sup>120</sup> For Nakano’s use of body guards see Oates, p. 34-35.

<sup>121</sup> Both quotes taken from Ugaki’s diary, entries for March 4 and 5, 1926. Ugaki Kazunari [宇垣一成], “The Diary of Ugaki Kazunari” [宇垣一成日記], ed. Tsunoda Jun [角田順], 3 vols (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1970), volume 1, p. 512-16. This was probably the low-point in the relations between Ugaki and Nakano. Over the following years they would move closer and eventually become allies in the struggle against Tōjō. Ugaki would express his regrets over the losing Nakano after the latter’s death. Ibid. volume 3, p. 1568.

<sup>122</sup> The *Tokyo Asahi* editorial “The Secrets of the Army cliques” [陸軍軍閥の秘密], March 6, 1926, agreed with Nakano writing: “Even someone naïve will become suspicious at these facts. We wish to request that the army’s authorities would make [the details of] this question completely public.” quoted in Inomata, p. 218.

fraud and misappropriation of public funds against Tanaka with the public prosecutors.<sup>123</sup> These accusations more or less substantiated Nakano's claims. If proven true, the charges would have destroyed Tanaka's political career, even if they would have been insufficient to impeach him immediately given the immunity he enjoyed as a member of the Upper House.

The Seiyūkai's counterattack was immediate. Beginning on the afternoon of March 4, 1926 (the very day of Nakano's speech in the Diet), the Seiyūkai-affiliated *Nihon Shimbun* newspaper started running articles attacking Nakano for sympathizing with communism.<sup>124</sup> The most serious of these, published on March 5, contained a quote by Kubota Eikichi, former member of the Japanese expeditionary forces in Siberia, who said that while in Russia he met a white Russian who told him "both Miyake [Setsurei] and Nakano [had] actually received 100,000 Yen from [the Soviet representative] Antonov" in order to write positively about the Soviet Union.<sup>125</sup> Attacks in the Diet accompanied the defamatory media campaign. On March 11, 1926, the Seiyūkai submitted a proposal to parliament that Nakano should "repent" [反省] for having held "nonsensical speeches on the sacred Diet floor, confused the people, upset military discipline ... and having secretly been directed by Communists to drive a wedge between the people and the

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<sup>123</sup> The full text of the paymaster's accusations was published by the *Jiji Shimpō* [時事新報], March 6, 1926. See Inomata p. 210-13.

<sup>124</sup> The first, published on March 4, made Nakano responsible for the calamities that allegedly had befallen three individuals (and their families) after listening to Nakano's pro-Russian speeches in the early 1920s. See "Nakano's Red Speeches Destroy Three Families" [中野の赤化演説三家庭を破壊す] in *Nihon Shimbun* March 4, 1926.

<sup>125</sup> The *Nihon Shimbun* had published the account of Kubota's imprisonment in the Soviet Union in a series of articles starting November 1925 and ending March 1926. The account was subsequently published as a book: Kubota Eikichi [久保田栄吉], "Two years in a Soviet Prison" [赤露二年の獄中生活], (Tokyo 1926) see p. 145 for the quote. Kubota repeated his accusations in his "Declaration to my people concerning the Nakano question" [中野問題に就いて我が国民諸君に訴う], (Tokyo, 1926), see p. 4-31. Trying to label Nakano as a communist, the same *Nihon Shimbun* (March 5, 1926) also ran an article under the headline: "Communism or Democracy? Let's do Both – The interview between Nakano and Soviet Russia's Secret Envoy" [共産か民主か両股かけるサーと中野と赤露の密使との会見].

army.”<sup>126</sup> Seiyūkai member Makino Ryōzō,<sup>127</sup> casting himself in the role of protector of the army’s honor, used the Kubota quote to accuse Nakano of taking 100,000 Yen from the Soviet representative Antonov for the purpose of turning Japan communist, as well as of being a secret member of the Communist 3<sup>rd</sup> International.<sup>128</sup>

The ensuing debate was, to say the least, heated. The March 5 morning edition of Tokyo *Asahi News* carried the following description: “Amidst disorder, the [Diet] session lasted until late in the night before the proceedings were interrupted. Even when the chairman rang his bell, he was not heard. During yesterday’s lower house session it was proposed that Nakano Seigō commit suicide.”<sup>129</sup> The debate continued throughout March 12 and 13, when Makino proposed that Nakano face an inquiry commission. Sensing an opportunity to prove his innocence, Nakano and the Kenseikai supported the motion.

In the event, three of the four witnesses Makino summoned to testify against Nakano before the inquiry commission could not confirm that he had received Yen 100,000, which left Kubota’s quote as the only support for Makino’s case.<sup>130</sup> Desperate for evidence, Makino produced what he called a translation of an article from a Russian paper stating that Nakano had received money from Antonov. Nakano, however, was able to show that the article was a forgery.<sup>131</sup> In the end, the inquiry commission concluded that the accusations against Nakano

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<sup>126</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 417.

<sup>127</sup> Makino Ryōzō [牧野良三] (1885 - 1961), lawyer and politician.

<sup>128</sup> For Makino’s speech see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 417-18.

<sup>129</sup> *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, March 12, 1926, (quoted in Inomata p. 225).

<sup>130</sup> Katō Mineo, who had been named by Makino as a witness of Nakano receiving money from the Soviets, published a denial in various newspapers on March 15, stating that “I feel sorry for Mr. Makino, but as far as I know, can only state clearly that Nakano never did such an ugly thing.” Katō quoted in Inomata p. 226.

<sup>131</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 418 The article is partly quoted in Inomata p. 227-8.

were without substance.<sup>132</sup>

Before the end of the month, it became clear that the Seiyūkai's smear campaign had backfired – or, as one newspaper put it, “Makino helped Nakano get a name. Thank you.”<sup>133</sup> In desperation, the Seiyūkai played their last card: physical intimidation. After the end of the Diet session on the evening of March 26, twelve thugs visited Nakano's home. He confronted them in front of his house and – so we are told by his son - shortly afterward, eight fled while four fell to their knees apologizing. Not satisfied, Nakano led the remaining four into his garden, had them kneel down again and gave them a warning talk while a group of boarding students armed with wooden swords watched over them. Nakano's wife took pity on the quartet and came to their rescue, bringing them hot noodle soup to warm them up before inviting them into the house.<sup>134</sup>

Though this incident marked the end of the Seiyūkai's attacks and Nakano emerged uninjured physically, the hit to his reputation lingered. Moreover, Tanaka and his aides suffered no lasting political damage,<sup>135</sup> rendering Nakano's sacrifice smaller in retrospect.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> In an interview conducted in 1955, even Makino acknowledged: “I no longer believe that Nakano received money from Russia. Nor that he is a secret member [of the Comintern]. .... I must admit that that fight ended clearly in a victory for Nakano.” Makino in Hasegawa Shun “Three Enigmas of Japan – The Theory that Nakano Seigō was a Secret Member of the Communist Party ” [特集文芸春秋：三代日本の謎—中野正剛秘密黨員説] special edition of *Bungei Shunjū* [文芸春秋], 1955, partially quoted in Inomata, p. 225-229.

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in Inomata p. 229.

<sup>134</sup> See Watanabe Yukio [渡部行男], “The Enigma of Nakano Seigō's Suicide”, p. 119-120.

<sup>135</sup> Neither Tanaka nor his aide were ever charged in the matter. Investigations against them were terminated after Ishida Motozuki [石田基] the public prosecutor in charge was found dead under a bridge in Tokyo in October 1926.

<sup>136</sup> Rumors surrounding Nakano's involvement in the communist party survived well into the postwar period. In 1955, former prosecutor Koizumi Terasaburō made claims that Nakano had been a member of the Comintern, operating under the name “Comrade 818” and charged with reporting the strength and location of Japanese military facilities. Koizumi based his claims on documents to which he had access while working at the prosecutor's office of the Tokyo district court before 1945. However, since these were subsequently lost in the war, it is impossible to ascertain whether Koizumi's claims are right. While Koizumi's former colleagues confirm that the Secret Higher Police were investigating Nakano following

## Nakano's First Position in the Administration

Nakano's efforts on his party's behalf were rewarded when, on February 4, 1927, he was offered the position of parliamentary councilor [参与官] to the Ministry of Finance under Kataoka Naoharu. Nakano at first rejected the offer on the grounds that he was simply "not cut out" [柄ではない] for the job, adding: "My ambition lies in governing the nation. Financial administration should be left to the accounting magistrates [勘定奉行]. How can I, Nakano Seigō, become such a scruffy public servant?"<sup>137</sup> Nakano's immediate reaction smacks of the disdain that samurai traditionally held for members of the merchant class, as well as for mathematics and monetary affairs in general. In the end, however, his predecessor Miki Bukichi convinced Nakano that economics and finance were integral to modern politics and Nakano accepted the position.

The job gave Nakano an opportunity to deepen his understanding of finance and economics, and taught him to respect bureaucratic expertise. His tenure, however, was brief, as he surrendered the position on April 17, 1927, when Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijirō<sup>138</sup> (who had succeeded Katō after his death) resigned. Until the formation of the Hamaguchi cabinet in 1929, Nakano and the Kenseikai found themselves once again in the opposition.

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the nation-wide crack down on communists starting March 15, 1928, they do not agree with him as to the results of these investigations. The fact that the police did not take any action against Nakano after the investigation was completed, put Koizumi's claims into question. See the appendix entitled "The Enigma of Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛の謎] in Koizumi Terasaburō [小泉輝三郎], "History of Taishō Period Crimes" [大正犯罪史正談], (Daigaku Shobō, Tokyo, 1955) (reprinted in 1997); p. 223 – 254. For a discussion of Koizumi's allegations see Inomata, p. 230-40

<sup>137</sup> Nakano quoted by Miki Bukichi who offered Nakano the position after resigning himself. Miki Bukichi [三木武吉], "Fight to the death against the Tōjō cabinet" [東条内閣との死闘], part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 11.

<sup>138</sup> Wakatsuki Reijirō [若槻礼次郎] (1866-1949), politician and later Prime Minister of Japan.



## **Founding of Rikken Minseitō**

The Kenseikai used its time out of government to regroup and prepare for the next election, which – following the passage of universal suffrage in 1925 – was expected to involve new campaigning tactics including mass media. Nakano's journalistic background, writing skills and populist bent made him an ideal person to guide his fellow Kenseikai members through this transition period.

To strengthen their position in the Diet and in the hopes of capturing the votes of the newly enfranchised Japanese populace, the Kenseikai merged with the Seiyū-hontō in early June of 1927. As the party's propaganda chief, Nakano not only drafted the new party's platform and founding declaration, but, according to Ogata, was also “the parent who gave the party its name.”<sup>139</sup> The new party, called “Rikken Minseitō” - meaning “Constitutional Popular Government Party” - proposed to “reflect the general will of the people in the Diet and to realize politics centered upon the Diet under the administration of the Emperor.” Nakano's passion and enthusiasm for writing the party's declaration was contagious. After reading the document, Minseitō president Hamaguchi, said: “Even someone with his body full of diseases will, upon reading this declaration once, feel his entire body overflow with hot blood.”<sup>140</sup>

Nakano was also charged with formulating the 1928 general election strategy. He sought to cast the Minseitō as popular party along the lines of the idealistic project he had pursued on and off since entering politics. Touring the country as head of the election campaign department [遊説部長], Nakano attended all the party's provincial-chapter launches, giving speeches touting the party's grass-roots base:

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<sup>139</sup> Ogata, p. 21. According to Inomata Nakano was aided by Nagai Ryūtarō. See Inomata p. 255.

<sup>140</sup> Hamaguchi quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 455.

“The Rikken Minseitō is not made from the top but is being built from the bottom up. Based on its members in the provinces all over the country, chapters are set up. The central headquarters is established on these provincial chapters, so that the will from the provinces reaches the center, and the central direction reaches the provinces.”<sup>141</sup>

### **The 1928 General Election**

Following an established pattern, in late 1927, the incoming Seiyūkai government dissolved the Diet and called a general election for early 1928. The cabinet calculated that through the ministry of the interior, then headed by Suzuki Kisaburō, and the police force - which was controlled by said ministry - the Seiyūkai would be able to influence the election so as to strengthen their support base and possibly even gain an absolute majority in the Diet.

The 1928 general election was Japan's first held under universal suffrage, where “universal” meant all men over the age of 25 were eligible to vote, making for a dramatic increase in the electorate. Nakano's electoral district, which included not only urban Fukuoka but also the surrounding rural districts, now counted 110,127 registered voters, up from less than ten thousand. The sheer size of the new electorate, as well as the fact that three-quarters of voters lived in rural districts, rendered the tradition of visiting and bribing individual voters at their homes completely impracticable. Speechmaking continued to be crucial to campaigning, but, more than ever before, printed mass media - including posters,<sup>142</sup> hand-outs and, especially, newspapers - came to play a central role in the campaign process. The fact that Nakano had become president of the *Kyūshū Nippō* just prior to the election proved invaluable in winning votes over the coming weeks.

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<sup>141</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 455.

<sup>142</sup> The February 18, 1928 issue of the *Kyūshū Nippō* wrote that “The streets of Fukuoka look like there was a poster exhibition.” Quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 469.

Still, the campaign was tough. For one, as head of the Minseitō's election campaign bureau, Nakano had to tour the country supporting candidates in other districts and thus could not devote himself wholeheartedly to campaigning in Fukuoka. Even more important, his opponents from the Seiyūkai could count on the police to interfere on their behalf. At the campaign's outset, Nakano got a taste of what government interference could mean, as the police entered the *Gakan* offices and confiscated a pamphlet Nakano had intended to use in the campaign. But while the government was able to obstruct the pamphlet's distribution, its intention to torpedo Nakano's campaign backfired, as the incident was reported in newspapers across Japan. Nakano also used it to attack the government in subsequent campaign speeches.

Most commonly, police interference in the election took the form of censoring speeches. All political speeches were monitored by a police officer who was authorized to interrupt or even end a speech for content deemed out of order. Doing so was a double-edged sword, however, for police interference could win voters' sympathies. When Nakano in a February 9, 1928 speech attacked the government's confiscation of his pamphlet, the police officer monitoring the speech issued a "Warning" [注意 also meaning "attention"]. When Nakano parried the interjection with irony, the officer asked Nakano to "Stop" [中止]. Nakano continued teasing the officer by pretending not to have understood; much to the delight of his audience, he asked innocently: "Do you want me to stop?" Onlookers began shouting slogans such as "Police Oppression" [警察横暴] and "Election Interference" [選挙干渉], enabling Nakano to continue.<sup>143</sup> Unofficial interferences by hecklers were harder, though not impossible, to handle. On February 17, 1928, a tin can filled with human excrement was hurled at Nakano from among the audience; Nakano simply continued his speech while the culprit was apprehended.

Nakano won the election thanks to his oratory skills and control over the *Kyūshū Nippō*,

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<sup>143</sup> Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 469.

obtaining 18,761 votes - more than any other candidate in his district. Overall, the election produced a stalemate in the Diet, yielding almost an equal number of seats to the two established parties (219 for the Minseitō and 217 for the Seiyūkai).

### **Nakano against Tanaka and the Seiyūkai**

Encouraged by his victory, Nakano left Fukuoka three days after the election and – in his own words - “returned to the capital to overthrow the cabinet.”<sup>144</sup> Even before the Diet opened, the Minseitō put out feelers to see if there was a majority for a vote of non-confidence to topple the Tanaka cabinet. The response from the other opposition parties was lukewarm.<sup>145</sup> Still, after the opening of the 55<sup>th</sup> extraordinary Diet, the Minseitō led the opposition parties in submitting a bill demanding, among other things, the impeachment of Suzuki Kisaburō, Minister of the Interior, for using the police to interfere in the election. The bill also proposed laws that would make future interference difficult or impossible.<sup>146</sup> While this bill passed with the support of the other opposition parties, forcing Suzuki’s resignation, the Seiyūkai blocked a subsequent vote of non-confidence in the cabinet.

After the Diet’s closing, Nakano - who had played a central role in each anti-Cabinet move - continued harassing the government over Tanaka’s China policy. In the 1920s, China presented a dilemma to Japanese policy makers. Should Japan support the Kuomintang government under Chiang Kai-shek, heir to the republican revolution of 1911, which controlled southern China and was attempting to unify the country through a series of military campaigns? Such had been the foreign policy of the Kenseikai cabinets up to 1927, despite the fact the Kuomintang’s closeness

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<sup>144</sup> Nakano Seigō in the *Kyūshū Nippō*, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 470.

<sup>145</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 472.

<sup>146</sup> The bill also attacked the government’s heavy-handed dealing with left-wing radicals during the wave of mass arrests that had swept through Japan on March 15, 1928.

to the Communists and the prospect of military conflicts in the north, where most of Japan's interests were, made it a risky option. Alternatively, Japan could try supporting regional leaders, so-called 'warlords' who controlled portions of China's north, in hopes that the warlords would, in exchange, act as protectors of Japanese interests in the area. By supporting the warlords, however, Japan stood in the way of Chinese unification and thus risked antagonizing Chinese nationalist sentiment. Unable to choose between these two options, Tanaka - who served concurrently as Prime and Foreign Minister - did a bit of both, with disastrous results.

Things initially looked promising enough. In late 1927, Tanaka met with Chiang Kai-shek and agreed that Japan would recognize China's unification under the Kuomintang as long as the Kuomintang distanced itself from the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union. Chiang kept his word, announcing a break with the Chinese Communist Party and ending relations with the Soviet Union. Tanaka did not. When Chiang's troops moved north the following spring to take control of northern China, Tanaka sent expeditionary troops to the Shandong to protect Japanese residents, *de facto* also shielding northern warlord Chang Tsuo-lin.<sup>147</sup> Japanese and Chinese nationalist troops clashed in the city of Jinan on March 3, 1928, bringing anti-Japanese sentiment in China to a boil.

While the Tanaka government seemed to be supporting Chang Tsuo-lin's regime, Japanese officers on the Chinese mainland decided he stood no chance against Chiang Kai-shek's troops and believed the only way to avoid a bloody conflict in northern China was to get rid of Chang. Without informing (let alone asking for permission from) Tokyo, on June 3, 1928, they blew up Chang's railway carriage, killing him. This let Chiang Kai-shek move his troops to Beijing unopposed and thus completed the unification of China, but rumors that Chang had fallen victim

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<sup>147</sup> Chang Tsuo-lin [張作霖] (1875 – 1928) Chinese warlord in control of northern China. Nakano had met Chang Tsuo-lin in the fall of 1920 when traveling through Manchuria and Korea and described his personality in Nakano Seigō, "Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea", p. 168.

to Japanese scheming further fanned the flames of anti-Japanese feelings in China.

Nakano's criticism accompanied Tanaka as his policy stumbled from one disaster to the next in China. Speaking to an audience that included Fukuoka businessmen on July 31, 1928, Nakano blamed Tanaka's policy not only for the rise of anti-Japanese boycotts in China, but also for the loss of Japanese lives during the Jinan Incident.<sup>148</sup> Nakano said Tanaka's policy meant anti-Japanese sentiment had become stronger than ever, so much so that "in the area around Shanghai even children know that he [Tanaka] is a sworn enemy."<sup>149</sup> In a pamphlet called "The Miserable Failure of the Tanaka Foreign Policy," Nakano stated categorically that "China's unification is the over-riding trend of modern China" and noted that anyone opposing it risked "having to face the whole of China as an enemy." Rather than seeing Chinese unification as a threat to Japan, Nakano argued it should be viewed as "a natural historical development" [当然の歴史的発展] that did not contradict Japan's interests.<sup>150</sup>

Nakano's most famous and influential attack on Tanaka, however, came during the Question and Answer sessions of budgetary hearings at the beginning of the 56<sup>th</sup> Diet. Before the Diet's opening, Tanaka met with opposition leaders and requested that they exclude the Chang Tsuo-lin Incident from debate because of its international implications.<sup>151</sup> They refused and when

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<sup>148</sup> Subsequent quotes are taken from the speech "Renewal of the Policy *vis-à-vis* China" [対支政策の更新] published in "Appealing to the People: A collection of speeches by Nakano Seigō" [国民に訴う: 中野正剛大演説集], (Tokyo: Heibon-sha [平凡社], April, 1929), p. 213-316. For Tanaka's responsibility see Ibid. p. 242.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>150</sup> Quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, "The Miserable Failure of the Tanaka Foreign Policy" [田中外交の参敗], (Tokyo December 1928), partly reproduced in Inomata, p. 270 and following.

<sup>151</sup> According to general Kaneko Sada'ichi, the army officer in charge of investigating the assassination of Chang Tsuo-lin, Tanaka had been informed that the bombing had been carried out by the Japanese army on October 18, 1928. Thus, while Tanaka knew this, Nakano – according to Kaneko – remained ignorant. See Kaneko Sada'ichi [金子定一]; "A military man's view on Nakano Seigō" [一軍人の知る中野正剛] in *Japan and the Japanese* [日

the Diet opened on January 22, 1929, Nagai Ryūtarō of the Minseitō was the first to bring up the subject. Three days later, Nakano took the stand and over the course of three full days (January 25, 26 and 29) pummeled Tanaka and his Army Minister Shirakawa with a barrage of questions. Tanaka initially tried answering Nakano's queries, but Nakano's relentlessness meant Tanaka's answers grew increasingly shorter and evasive. On day three, Nakano's mentor, Adachi, took Nakano aside and asked him "to wrap it up" as Tanaka was "already screaming for mercy."<sup>152</sup> Nakano concluded by asking for Tanaka's resignation.

While Nakano did not attain his aim of toppling the government at this stage, his duel with Prime Minister Tanaka was reported widely in the press, adding to Nakano's fame. On January 30, the *Yomiuri* celebrated Nakano's stand in the Diet, writing:

"Today it was again Nakano Seigō from the Minseitō who put Prime Minister Tanaka in a tight spot by pressing him for an answer concerning the important incident. ...[Tanaka] was confused and his answers were incoherent. In the end he sought shelter behind phrases such as "This is presently being investigated", "I am not responsible" or "I won't take responsibility for that."<sup>153</sup>

The fight against Tanaka also improved Nakano's position within the Minseitō, where he became known for his oratorical skills, for his expertise on China and as a "heroic fighter."<sup>154</sup> Together with Nagai Ryūtarō, Nakano was now seen as one of the party's rising stars; both could reasonably hope to be offered influential positions when the Minseitō was asked to form the next cabinet.

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本及び日本人], April, 1956.

<sup>152</sup> Adachi quoted in Inomata p. 287.

<sup>153</sup> The *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 30, 1929, quoted in Inomata p. 287-88.

<sup>154</sup> This at least is how Nakano was described in the 1930 edition of "Meiji & Taishō History: Taishō Personalities" [明治大正史—大正人名辞典], ed. Noyori Hideichi [野依秀市], (Tokyo, 1930).

### **Nakano's Role in the Hamaguchi Cabinet**

When the Tanaka cabinet finally fell in the summer of 1929, Minseitō president Hamaguchi Osachi was asked to form the next cabinet. His administration set out an ambitious program, foreseeing fiscal retrenchment, a return to the gold standard, public-official pay cuts, armament reductions, and the rationalization of industry. To gain a favorable majority in the Diet, Hamaguchi called a general election for February 1930; he won 103 seats (up from 170), taking his total to 273 and giving him a wide lead over the Seiyūkai, which counted only 174 representatives. Most of the credit for this victory went to Nakano's mentor Adachi, Minister of the Interior under Hamaguchi, but Nakano, as head of the party's election campaign bureau, also contributed to the victory and was himself returned comfortably to parliament.<sup>155</sup>

Bolstered by an absolute majority, the Hamaguchi cabinet began implementing its ambitious program - with catastrophic results. As the effects of the Great Depression reached Japan and the domestic economy slowed, fiscal retrenchment and returning to the gold standard made a bad situation worse. The cabinet's most controversial move, however, was ratifying the London Naval Arms Treaty submitted to the 58<sup>th</sup> extraordinary Diet in April 1930, which brought the cabinet into conflict with the armed services, right-wing groups and the Privy Council. The right-wing activist who shot and wounded Hamaguchi on November 14 justified his act on the grounds that the cabinet's policies had worsened the recession, increased unemployment and weakened the imperial navy. While Hamaguchi was in hospital, his duties were carried out by Foreign Minister Shidehara. After Hamaguchi's death in the spring of 1931, he was succeeded by

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<sup>155</sup> As head of the party's election campaign bureau, Nakano had introduced new media such as film showings of speeches by Hamaguchi, Adachi and other important party figures into the election campaign process. This not only made it possible to transport speeches to more than one location at a time, film showing also greatly impressed voters in the countryside where movies were still rare. Unfortunately, it also opened the opportunity for new ways of sabotaging election campaigns. In Fukuoka one of the showing was interrupted by a Seiyūkai supporter cutting the cables to the speakers. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 532.



party president Wakatsuki.

Nakano's role in the Hamaguchi administration was somewhat removed from these tragic events and much less dramatic. For his efforts on the party's behalf, Nakano won the position of parliamentary vice-minister [政務次官] within the Ministry of Communications [逓信省]. Compared to Nagai Ryūtarō, who had been made parliamentary vice-minister in the more prestigious Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nakano's posting was somewhat of a disappointment; Nakano noted that he considered the decision strange.<sup>156</sup>

In fact, the appointment came not because of Nakano's expertise (the ministry managed Japan's telecommunications network), but rather because the Minister of Communications, Koizumi Matajirō<sup>157</sup>, was the only cabinet member who did not the object to having a "wild card" [悍馬]<sup>158</sup> such as Nakano on his team. Nakano's placement in Koizumi's ministry also had its perks. Koizumi gave Nakano wide-ranging freedom and responsibilities, telling him in one of their initial talks that he would "leave all political matters in your hands and concentrate mainly on harmonizing relations with the party."<sup>159</sup> Nakano accepted the position because he saw it "as an opportunity to learn."<sup>160</sup> Over the next 18 months, he immersed himself in reforming the Japanese telecommunications network, producing a proposal for its privatization that bore some similarity to the privatization carried out in post-war Japan.

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<sup>156</sup> See Nakano Seigō [中野正剛]; "Until I return to the Party Headquarters" [党本部に帰るまで], in *Gakan* [我観]; February, 1931, p. 22-28.

<sup>157</sup> Koizumi Matajirō [小泉又次郎] (1856-1951), politician. Nakano had known Matajirō since at least 1925 when he presented him with a dog, which he brought back from his trip to Siberia and Manchuria. Koizumi was the grandfather of later Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō.

<sup>158</sup> Ogata, p. 39.

<sup>159</sup> Koizumi quoted in Inomata, p. 292.

<sup>160</sup> Nakano Seigō [中野正剛]; "Until I return to the Party Headquarters" [党本部に帰るまで], in *Gakan* [我観], February, 1931, p. 22-28.

### **Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Communications**

As parliamentary vice-minister, Nakano quickly engaged in pork-barrel politics, distributing favors to past - and hopefully future - supporters. One of his first decisions at the Ministry of Communications was opposing bureaucratic salary cuts, which the government had made part of their fiscal retrenchment program. Nakano's stance won him great popularity among ministry officials and facilitated his eventual appointment to an executive position in the ministry's union. Similarly, he favored the application of the Kyūshū Electric Association for a research facility over competing applications from other regions.

Nakano's main project at the ministry, however, was the "Plan for the Privatization of the Telegraph and Telephone Business" [電信電話事業の民営案]. Japan had followed the examples of the Western Powers by providing telecommunication services through a state-owned and -run monopoly. In formulating the privatization proposal, Nakano was heavily influenced by G.D.H. Cole's "The Next Ten Years in British Social and Economic Policy,"<sup>161</sup> to which he had been introduced by his longtime friend, Prof. Sugimori from Waseda.

Japanese literature often stresses how much energy Nakano poured into this proposal's development and how his enthusiasm rubbed off on ministry officials. After the initial proposal passed at the cabinet level, the ministry's bureaucrats carried out a massive research project under Nakano's leadership. Amid the hottest summer in years, truckloads of documents were brought to the ministry, sifted through and analyzed. The ministry's staff worked not only until late at night but also on weekends and holidays, and it is said that two officials actually collapsed at work due

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<sup>161</sup> George Douglas Howard Cole "The Next Ten Years of British Social and Economic Policy", (London, 1929). Nakano was so taken with Cole's ideas that he pushed Senkura Publishing to translate the text and publish it in Japanese. The translation prepared by Shimizu Motohisa [清水元寿] was published in 1931 under the title "State control of the Economy" [経済の国家統制] (Tokyo, Senkura Shobō, 1931) and included a preface by Nakano.

to exhaustion. The plan Nakano developed with their help proposed creating a private company under government control. According to Nakano:

“The plan foresaw that the operation of the telegraph and telephone services would remain firmly in the hands of the government, while construction, improvement and maintenance were to be carried out by a semi-public/semi-private corporation that would be financed by private capital. ... The expansion [of the infrastructure] would proceed at a pace twice as fast as today’s. ... If this proposal were carried out, the installation of a telephone line would no longer require a large sum of money such as one thousand or several hundred Yen, as is the case today. A small special monthly installment payment would suffice entirely.”<sup>162</sup>

When the proposal, which had been kept secret during its development, was finally announced on July 1, 1930, it caused quite a stir. In the words of a contemporary journalist, the proposal ran counter to “the economic principles then in vogue worldwide, which stated that all public utilities should be run by the government.”<sup>163</sup> The proposal drew criticism in particular from left-wing parties, who feared that private ownership of the telecommunications infrastructure would drive up the prices of telecommunication services, rendering them affordable only to the rich. Nakano countered that while private capital would fuel the network’s expansion, the network itself would remain under government control.<sup>164</sup>

In the end, however, it was not criticism by left-wing parties that torpedoed the proposal, but rather the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Hamaguchi in Tokyo Station. Foreign Minister Shidehara, who took over Hamaguchi’s duties, declared that all controversial bills or policies would be temporarily put on ice and that the government would concentrate on neutral themes until the situation calmed down. Nakano’s proposal was among this decision’s first

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<sup>162</sup> Nakano Seigō [中野正剛]; “Until I Return to the Party Headquarters” [党本部に帰るまで]; in *Gakan* [我観]; February, 1931, p. 22-28.

<sup>163</sup> Unnamed journalist quoted in Inomata, p. 295.

<sup>164</sup> See Inomata, p. 296.

victims. Sensing that the project's postponement was probably its death, Nakano resigned from his position as parliamentary vice-minister in November 1930.

### **Intra-Party Struggle Over Hamaguchi's Succession**

Nakano's resignation has been seen by some biographers as "the turning point in his political life, as it marked the limit of his adaptation to a career pattern within the established order and the beginning" of his move away from liberalism.<sup>165</sup> While true, this only became clear in retrospect. At the time, Nakano certainly did not think of it as a turning point, but as, at best, a setback. The title of one of Nakano's essays of the time - "Until I Return to Party Headquarters"<sup>166</sup> - makes clear his intention to return quickly to a position of power within the Minseitō. Only after all his attempts to re-integrate himself into the established order had failed did he turn away.

For the time being, Nakano continued defending the Minseitō party and government against outside attacks (be they from the Seiyūkai, the Army or elsewhere), while engaging in intra-party power struggles. As Hamaguchi fought for his life, the party prepared to fill the two positions his death would open. Temporary prime ministership went automatically to vice-premier and Foreign Minister Shidehara (himself a member of the bureaucratic faction), but only for the duration of Hamaguchi's hospitalization. More important in the long term was the party presidency, for the Minseitō president would in all likelihood form the next cabinet after Hamaguchi's death. Accordingly, the pure party faction to which Nakano belonged tried securing the party presidency for their leader, Adachi.

As early as December 12, the young pure party politicians proposed a resolution according

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<sup>165</sup> Oates, p. 42-43.

<sup>166</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Until I Return to Party Headquarters" [党本部に帰るまで], in *Gakan*, February 1931, p. 24-5.

to which, “until the complete recovery of our president [Hamaguchi], an important figure from within or party should be elected to serve as temporary Prime Minister.”<sup>167</sup> There was little doubt that the “important party figure” allusion targeted Adachi. When this resolution failed to produce the desired shift in Minseitō policy, Nakano appealed directly to the bed-ridden Hamaguchi.

In a much-quoted letter to Hamaguchi, Nakano expressed his misgivings about seeing Shidehara become Prime Minister. Nakano believed Shidehara was not suited to “act as the representative of the Minseitō cabinet” because he was “not a party member” and had “publicly declared that he is ashamed of being a party politician.”<sup>168</sup> Nakano directly advocated making Adachi, whom he called “fair and without conceit, careful in his dealings and never selfish,”<sup>169</sup> party president. He concluded his letter: “Adachi has always respected your wishes with respect to party affairs. ... would be able to restore the party’s prestige internally and externally. ... If you don’t believe that Adachi would make a clear-headed president, I don’t know what else to say.”<sup>170</sup>

Nakano’s exertions on Adachi’s behalf were not without self-interest. Had he succeeded in convincing Hamaguchi to make Adachi his successor, Adachi might very well have become Japan’s next Prime Minister – and Nakano would likely have been offered a ministerial portfolio. In spite of Nakano’s efforts, however, Hamaguchi handed the party presidency to bureaucrat Wakatsuki Reijirō. Accordingly, when on April 13, 1931 the entire cabinet resigned due to Hamaguchi’s worsening medical condition (he died of his injuries on August 26 of the same year), the prime ministership went to Wakatsuki and Nakano was not offered a ministerial position.

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<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Inomata, p. 302.

<sup>168</sup> Nakano’s letter to Hamaguchi dated January 8, 1931, reproduced in Nakano Seigō, “Trends of Japan in Transition” [転換日本の動向], (Tokyo, 1932), p.56-76, quote taken from p. 58-59.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. p. 63.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 64-65.

## Movement for the Coalition Cabinet

Temporarily relegated to the political sidelines, Nakano concentrated on writing. This relatively politics-free interlude ended with the Manchurian Incident of September 1931, in which young army officers took control of Manchuria. The move, carried out without permission, let alone orders, from Tokyo, was welcomed enthusiastically by the Japanese public but caused great division within the government. The Wakatsuki cabinet was soon split between the Army Minister, who wanted to separate Manchuria from China, and most of the other cabinet ministers (but especially Foreign Minister Shidehara), who wanted to discipline the army and come to a diplomatically negotiated solution with the Chinese government. Sensing that public opinion supported the army hard liners, Nakano, who heard the news while recovering from dengue fever in Kyūshū, returned to Tokyo and started lobbying on their behalf. Arguing the case for intervention, Nakano met with his party elders, including Wakatsuki and Shidehara, and recommended separating Manchuria from China.<sup>171</sup>

As the government hesitated and the crisis persisted, Nakano hoped to capitalize on the government's weakness by supporting a move for a coalition government supported by both the Minseitō and the Seiyūkai. The idea was launched by Wakatsuki after the October 17 Incident, in which young officers tried to carry out a *coup d'état*, and was driven by the hope that a coalition cabinet supported by the entire people would have more authority to deal with the disobedient

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<sup>171</sup> More specifically, Nakano told Wakatsuki: "As for the Manchurian problem, even in the worst case, the Powers will not send any soldiers in cooperation against Japan, because the mutually competitive nationalism of Europe has become ever stronger and keeps them from reaching out and cooperating. Also the economy, industry and livelihood of the world's Powers are at risk beyond description. They have problems in their own kitchen. There is not a single country which at a time like this has been spare time and money to run out the back door to interfere in a fight between Japan and China in their backyard. No need to worry." Nakano Seigō in a speech held January 15, 1932 titled "The Political Situation and the Direction of our Movement" [政局の真相と吾徒の動向] quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 604-07.

army.<sup>172</sup> Nakano readily embraced the notion, not so much because he was keen to chastise the now-popular army, but because he sensed that a coalition cabinet might return the political parties - and, more importantly, the Minseitō's Adachi faction - back to the political center. While different versions of the idea bounced around Japan's political world, the version for which Nakano campaigned feverishly foresaw the establishment of a coalition government between the Seiyūkai under Inukai and the Minseitō under Adachi (because Adachi enjoyed the trust of the army). In either case, Nakano was reasonably sure to be given an important position.

Between mid-October and mid-December 1931, Nakano visited not only party elders but also army officers, businessmen, Seiyūkai members, and even Inukai himself (offering him the premiership in the would-be coalition cabinet) to gain support for the idea. But Nakano's frenzied activity itself caused the scheme to fail. As Adachi put it: "Nakano Seigō did not keep a secret a secret. Because he told everyone, solidarity among the [Wakatsuki] cabinet strengthened as each cabinet member feared for his post, tried to protect himself and opposed the idea."<sup>173</sup> On December 11, Wakatsuki announced that he would not be part of a coalition cabinet and asked Adachi to either abandon the scheme or withdraw from his cabinet post. When Adachi did not reply within the given time, the Wakatsuki cabinet resigned *in toto* on December 13, 1931. On the same day, both Adachi and Nakano left the Minseitō in protest. Over the next month, they were followed by most of the members of the Adachi faction.<sup>174</sup> The notable exception was Nakano's

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<sup>172</sup> Wakatsuki's recollection of the events (followed by Nakano's) can be found in Ogata, p. 156-164.

<sup>173</sup> Adachi Kenzō [安達謙蔵], "The Autobiography of Adachi Kenzō" [安達謙蔵自叙伝], (Tokyo, 1960), p. 268-69.

<sup>174</sup> Those who left with Adachi were: Sugiura Takeo [杉浦武雄] (1890-?), Tanaka Kiyotatsu [田中養達] (1885 - ?), Miura Torao [三浦虎雄] (1883 - ?), Yutani Yoshiharu [由谷義治] (1888 - 1958), Okano Ryū'ichi [岡野龍一] (1893 - ?), Kangyū Tsuneo [簡牛凡夫] (1894 - ?), Kuhara Fusanosuke [久原房之助] (1869 - 1965), Yamaji (also Yamamichi) Jō'ichi [山道襄一], (1882 - 1941), and Tomita Kōjirō [富田幸次郎] (1897 - 1938). Tomita, however, soon returned to the Minseitō.

rival, Nagai Ryūtarō, who chose to remain behind, soon founded his own faction within the Minseitō and eventually became a minister in the Saitō cabinet.<sup>175</sup> Hopes that Adachi, as leader of this group of renegades, would be offered a position in the next cabinet - a Seiyūkai cabinet formed by Inukai - were not fulfilled, and this final burst of activity marked the end of Nakano's career within the established parties.

### **Conclusions: Domestic Politics**

In what ways did Nakano's political views develop in the 1920s, as the youthful ideals he had developed during his days as a journalist clashed with the sobering harshness of the real world? As has been shown, Nakano's central domestic objective was fostering popular participation in politics. One might thus expect the 1920s, which saw the introduction of universal suffrage, the emergence of party-cabinets and of Diet-centered politics - in short, the flowering of democracy in Japan despite some setbacks including the Peace Preservation Law - to have brought Nakano the satisfaction of a goal fulfilled and the promise of a future aligned with his ideals. And yet they did not.

Nakano continued to be frustrated by the way in which the Japanese people participated in politics. He deplored the lack of a popular party. Having tried in vain to establish such a party for the first part of the 1920s, Nakano in 1924 concluded the attempt had been premature and hence joined the Kenseikai. When the Kenseikai transformed itself into the Minseitō, Nakano, as head of the propaganda bureau, was able to give it a popular coloring - but the transformation remained largely superficial and the party continued relying on traditional power structures. Comparing China and Japan with respect to popular political awakening, Nakano wrote in 1929:

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<sup>175</sup> See Oates, p. 46.



“Within the Chinese people ... popular awareness [民族自覚] has gradually been fostered. In the past, the working classes submitted unconditionally to the ruling classes and did not even have the right to speak, but today political awareness is appearing within the laboring classes. ... In Japan, Tanaka is still at the helm of the cabinet, and keeps plowing on with no end in sight. According to public opinion, the reason Tanaka cannot be overthrown is that our Minseitō lacks verve, but you could also wonder if this is not a result of the fact that our labor class has not yet politically awoken. In China, the atmosphere of the politically awoken laboring class has swept away Chang Tsuo-lin, while our people seem to be unable to topple the Tanaka cabinet even under universal suffrage. This is truly a great shame.”<sup>176</sup>

Nakano never gave a single coherent explanation for Japanese voters’ failure to awake and play the role he had cast for them, but it is possible to piece together a number of factors that he held responsible.

First and fundamentally, the nature of Japanese education instilled a “worship of the powerful” [事大主義]<sup>177</sup> that rendered citizens docile subjects incapable of independent critical thought. Second, political parties - which Nakano envisioned as vehicles of popular participation in politics - were instead vehicles of the land-owning class and, with Japan’s industrialization, increasingly of the business class. Nakano deplored this in his letter to Hamaguchi dated January 1931:

“Another uncomfortable point that I cannot bear is that our party is exhibiting all the symptoms of being the political bureau of Mitsubishi [i.e. the Mitsubishi Zaibatsu]. When the head of Mitsubishi barks, the Minseitō will move; when his son-in-law Shidehara appears then the 270 men of the Minseitō will happily submit to him. Even if politics require money, politicians should not be the servants of money.”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Appealing to the People: A collection of speeches by Nakano Seigō”, p. 225-26.

<sup>177</sup> For Nakano’s explanation of the concept see “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 5.

<sup>178</sup> Letter from Nakano to Hamaguchi dated January 8, 1931, reproduced in Nakano Seigō, “Trends of Japan in Transition” [転換日本の動向], (Tokyo, 1932), p. 56-67, the quote is taken from p. 62.

Third and lastly, non-popularly-elected elites continued to hold more power than Nakano thought they deserved. In the course of the 1920s, Nakano picked fights with both the military and the Privy Council over their interference in Diet politics. Even within political parties, the power of non-party elites was greater than Nakano liked, as he discovered after Hamaguchi's assassination ushered in the rise of the Minseitō's bureaucratic faction. In short, while popular participation in politics had been rendered possible by universal suffrage, the political awakening and emancipation of the Japanese people and the launch of a popular mass party remained elusive.

It is tempting to sum up Nakano's life in the 1920s as that of a typical young man entering politics with lofty ideals and then, when confronted with reality, slowly accommodating himself with the political status quo until he eventually became a firm supporter thereof. This reading would be superficial. Nakano engaged with and tackled the political realities of his day and in the course was indeed drawn away from his ideals, but he did not surrender them. When confronted with the crisis of 1929-31, in fact, he abandoned his place within the established parties and returned to his ideals – not the other way around.

### **Foreign Relations**

Nakano's views on foreign relations at the decade's outset had been ordered around the fundamental distinction between the colonial Powers and the colonized nations. He believed Japan's mission was to lead the colonized nations of Asia (and, if possible, the world) to freedom by challenging the Western Powers' dominance. Nakano's frustration with Japanese foreign policy in the 1920s thus arose mainly from the fact that Japan chose, instead, to embark on a colonial program of its own. The main contradiction in Nakano's thinking was his unwillingness to concede to Chinese or Korean representatives that Japan had actually become a colonial empire itself.

In the course of the decade, the basic distinction between colonizer and colonized was partially supplanted by distinctions between haves and have-nots, or between capitalist and proletarian nations – terms first popularized in Japan by Kita Ikki.<sup>179</sup> According to Nakano, “from an international perspective, Japan is a proletarian [nation]. Our people who have an interest in the domestic proletarian movement should direct the same consciousness against the international capitalist [nations], that is, England and America.”<sup>180</sup>

Nakano’s view regarding which countries were capitalist and which were proletarian remained in flux throughout the 1920s. In the decade’s first half, Nakano included Soviet Russia in the proletarian camp, mainly because Russia challenged the international order on ideological grounds. This move made Russia Japan’s natural ally and partially explains Nakano’s support for recognizing the Soviet regime, as well as his advocacy on behalf of Russia’s admission to the League of Nations. In the decade’s latter half, Nakano included Russia more often among the capitalist nations because, like England and America, Russia held “vast territories and resources.”<sup>181</sup>

The capitalist vs. proletarian worldview led Nakano to see two options for Japanese foreign policy. First, with the cooperation of the capitalist Powers, Japan could strive to establish a more egalitarian international order. This could only be achieved, however, if the principles imposed by the Western Powers in East Asia - armament reduction, free movement of people, open markets, and free access to resources - were applied equally to the rest of the world. Thus, when discussing

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<sup>179</sup> The origin of the term “Proletarian Nation” is disputed. Gordon credits it to Corradini while Sottile claims that it was coined by Gramsci. See Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Imperial Japan*, (Berkeley, 1991), p. 255, note 52 and Joseph P. Sottile, “The Fascist Era: Imperial Japan and the Axis Alliance in Historical Perspective” in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p. 24.

<sup>180</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Appealing to the People: A collection of speeches by Nakano Seigō”, p. 301.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

the Western Powers' support for a Chinese open-door policy, Nakano demanded a "global open-door policy" [世界の門戸開放], saying: "Open the door to India, liberate the region subject to the Monroe doctrine, leave Africa, Oceania, to the free movement of the world's people!"<sup>182</sup> Nakano demanded a worldwide "abolition of all economic barriers to resources and markets."<sup>183</sup>

"The principles of international cosmopolitan economics have been applied to East Asia. That is fine with me. However, if these sort of principles of international economics are applied to East Asia, why is the same economic liberation not also practiced in Mexico and India? ... If you advocate international cooperation then you must have international economics - that is, trans-national economics that go beyond the nation-state and abolish national borders. Otherwise it will remain an ideal - a lifeless project on the planning table ... However, as a fact, this economic internationalism is enforced only in the Far East, while in Europe and America the Powers oppose it and stick to their policy of economic seclusion [経済的鎖国主義] and nationalism. That makes me angry from the bottom of my heart."<sup>184</sup>

Nakano railed against what he saw as similar hypocrisy in the Western Powers' approach to arms reduction. Commenting on the armament reductions discussed in Washington in the early 1920s, Nakano said he had "nothing against armament limitations, in fact I am a passionate supporter of them," only to then ask rhetorically: "What would England say if we proposed holding a conference on arms limitations and Indian problems? What would the US do if we were to propose a Mexican conference on Pacific Problems?"<sup>185</sup>

Nakano's perception of Western bias colored his assessments of the various international conferences, treaties, and institutions of the interwar period. The Treaty of Versailles, the Treaty of Washington, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the London Conference were all attempts, in his mind, by the Anglo-Saxon Powers to cement their paramount position and realize their "program

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 301-04.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>184</sup> Nakano Seigō in Diet Speech held on February 19, 1922 quoted in Nakano Yasuo. vol. 1, p. 331.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 330.

for control over the world” [英米世界支配のプログラム]. The League of Nations was little more than a “self-defense league for the strongest among the victors of WW1” and “not suited for true international justice.”<sup>186</sup> Moreover, Nakano deplored that successive Japanese governments supported these arrangements rather than opposing them.

The second policy option that the capitalist vs. proletarian worldview left open to Japan was one Nakano thought it ought to pursue if the Powers refused to cooperate in establishing a truly just international order. This option called for Japan to unilaterally carve out its own sphere of influence, following the US example of the Monroe Doctrine, which had declared Latin America a sphere in which the US would not tolerate interference, and of England, which Nakano believed was doing much the same with its colonies. Nakano thus believed Japan should declare a “Far Eastern Monroe Doctrine,” according to which the country would not tolerate outside interference in the East Asia region.

Throughout the early part of the decade, Nakano continued to prefer the international cooperation option. By the end of the decade, however, he changed his tone, writing, “I don’t believe that diplomatic isolation is necessarily a bad thing. On occasion, it may even be necessary to oppose the UK and the US in the Far East and act freely and independently of them.”<sup>187</sup> By 1931, international isolation had become “honorable”<sup>188</sup> in his eyes and he gave up on the idea of international cooperation altogether.

### **Relations to Asian Neighbors**

The two policy choices Nakano had outlined for Japan had important implications for the

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<sup>186</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Appealing to the People”, p. 298.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>188</sup> Nakano Seigō, in a speech held February 21, 1933 in expectation of Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 686.

country's relations with its Asian neighbors, especially China. Since access to overseas markets and resources was of paramount importance to proletarian Japan, it could not risk alienating China, Russia, or any other neighbors by ignoring popular trends within those countries. Much to Nakano's regret, this was exactly what Japan had done during the Siberian Intervention and, by ignoring the reality of Chinese nationalism, was doing again in the second half of the 1920s. Nakano wanted Japanese government officials to see that "China's development is in Japan's interest."<sup>189</sup> Instead of dealing with corrupt warlords,

"the partner of our foreign policy must be the national government [i.e. the Kuomintang government], which actually holds power. ... Otherwise, everything is useless. To deal with the government at Mukden [奉天, i.e. the warlord regime in the north] and base one's plans on that is just like dealing with and lending support to the regimes of Kolchak and Semyonov at the time of the Siberian intervention. It is absolutely stupid."<sup>190</sup>

Nakano believed Prime Minister Tanaka Gi'ichi's failure to understand this reality caused him to situate Japan as an obstacle to China's development, thereby spurring China's anti-Japanese sentiment and actions. The Western Powers, meanwhile, had played on Chinese nationalism to "isolate Japan in the Far East." Nakano hailed such isolation as "the greatest danger for our country on the international level. If we leave it at this, it is only natural that relations between Japan and China will come to an end."<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Appealing to the People", p. 308.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>191</sup> Both quotes from Ibid., p. 314-15. It should be noted that in spite of all his sympathy for the rise of Chinese nationalism and support for Chinese unification, Nakano continued to oppose the idea of returning Japanese rights to China: "I don't hesitate to feel sympathy, even favorably and supportive toward China when it comes to the questions of tax autonomy, the abolition of extraterritoriality, but let me state clearly that our country should reject Chinese demands for the return of Port Arthur, the Manchurian Railway and Guandong. With the exceptions of some patients inhabiting the mental asylums, everybody in Japan high and low agrees on this." Nakano Seigō, "Rebirth of Stagnant Japan" [沈滞日本の更生], Tokyo, August, 1931 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 587.

The chasm between Japan's actions and Nakano's ideals widened throughout the decade, and his sole refuge was his belief in a far-larger contradiction in the international order through which WW1 victors claimed the mantle of fairness while cementing injustice. An important continuity in his foreign policy outlook during the decade was his belief that Japan's foreign policy ought to align with foreign countries' popular trends rather than with the Western Powers' official pronouncements, as popular movements would spur far more dramatic and permanent change.<sup>192</sup>

### **What Might Have Been**

By the end of the 1920s, Nakano had become famous, not only in political circles but also to many common people with an interest in contemporary affairs. From at least 1925 on, his name was included in Japan's Who's Who and appeared frequently in the news.<sup>193</sup> If celebrity can be measured by the fact that the media report even insignificant details about one's life, Nakano met the criteria. His leg surgery in 1926 was covered,<sup>194</sup> as was his 1932 move to a bigger house, when the papers critiqued his style at length. Even Nakano's youngest brother's marriage to a Spanish woman made the news.

More than one biographer has remarked that had Nakano remained with the Minseitō at the end of 1931, he likely would have eventually headed a ministry or, perhaps, even become Prime

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<sup>192</sup> For the notion that popular trends cannot be opposed see Nakano Seigō, "Appealing to the People", p. 226 and following.

<sup>193</sup> Both the 1928 edition of "Who is Who" [大衆人事六録], edited by Ino Saburō [猪野三郎] (Tokyo, 1928) and the 1930 edition of "Meiji & Taishō History: Taishō Personalities" [明治大正史—大正人名辞典], edited Noyori Hideichi [野依秀市] (Tokyo: 1930), contain a short biography of Nakano.

<sup>194</sup> Under the headline "Mr. Nakano Seigō is sick. Underwent surgery in order to mend his leg. Half the left ankle is rotten", the August 5, 1926 edition of the *Kokumin Shimibun* reported on Nakano's surgery.

Minister.<sup>195</sup> Had Nakano, instead, died at that time - perhaps of the dengue fever he contracted in September 1931 in Kyūshū - he would likely be remembered as a true liberal, whose open-minded approach to communism and socialism and whose unique mixture of scientific curiosity and impartial self-confidence put to shame not only many of his contemporaries but also many a paranoid cold warrior of the post-WW2 era. A Nakano who passed away in 1931 would be remembered as a progressive modernizer – perhaps even a visionary - who more than once was ahead of his time. After all, this was a man who, as early as 1919, when his contemporaries were still debating whether to grant suffrage to all men over the age of 25, was already advocating female suffrage.<sup>196</sup> His vision of the international economic order - the “global open door policy” with free access to markets and resources - became the foundation of unprecedented global prosperity in the post-WW2 era. His critique of the Japanese political system (particularly of military interference in politics and Zaibatsu financing of political parties) foreshadowed the critique underlying the reforms introduced during Japan’s occupation after 1945. Even his plan for the privatization of the telecommunications network preempted the post-war privatization that led to the establishment of NTT.<sup>197</sup> Would the reader have guessed that the following extract was written by Nakano in 1921 and not by an anthropologist advising the US occupation forces on educational reforms in 1947?:

“In modern Japan, the morals that are taught demand submission to special authorities, while respect and love for human beings are not established. As long as we do not establish respect for oneself and for others, as well as love for oneself and for others; as long as we do not establish the SELF [大自我] as the commanding principle in the hearts of the Japanese people, we don’t have the right to talk ... [to others] about love.

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<sup>195</sup> See Ogata, p. 31.

<sup>196</sup> Although never central to Nakano’s political activities, he took a consistently favorable and supportive stance on the question of female suffrage. See Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference” [講和会議を目撃して], Tokyo 1919, pp. 255-58.

<sup>197</sup> See “Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛], in *Zaikai Kyūshū* [財界九州], November 2005, p. 118.



... Personally, I propose the term ‘greater individualist’ [大個人主義] to replace today’s submissive morals. ... The purpose of education is to build people. A complete person is an independent autonomous being [独立自主の人].”<sup>198</sup>

Had Nakano passed away in 1931, he would also be remembered as a man of integrity who, despite some contradictions, possessed a strong sense of justice, which he applied even when it was not in his interest. Unlike some Pan-Asian intellectuals and activists who talked of Asian brotherhood, only to add that Japan would be the elder (leading) brother, Nakano generally meant equality when he said it and advocated extending full citizenship rights to Japan’s colonial subjects. Unlike many other Pan-Asian thinkers, Nakano attacked racist acts as expressions of “mean thinking,”<sup>199</sup> not only when perpetrated by Europeans, but also when carried out by Japanese. Of the many times Nakano made a stand against Japanese racism, one example stands out: While traveling through Manchuria in 1920, Nakano wore a traditional Chinese suit, a gift from friends. As he tried to board a train, the conductor said a Japanese gentleman traveling alone had refused to share his compartment with Nakano, saying: “Me in the same compartment as a Chinese? I don’t like Chinks [おれはチャンコロいやだ].” After learning that the gentleman was a Japanese army officer, Nakano entered the compartment, confronted the official and, upon his return, endeavored to file a complaint about him.<sup>200</sup>

Overall, an impressive and likable character, was he not? A reader who nods in agreement may be surprised to learn that the next thing Nakano - this likable visionary and man of integrity - did was to turn fascist.

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<sup>198</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea”, p. 18.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p. 1 - 5

<sup>200</sup> When Nakano told a Korean about this, the latter replied: “You were lucky to have worn Chinese clothing. Had you worn Korean dress, you have gotten beaten up.” This anecdote can be found Ibid., p. 163-168.

## Chapter 4: The Road to Fascism

### Introduction

One way to view Japan's political history during the 1930s and early 1940s – and Nakano's role within it – is through the lens of a country gradually stumbling toward war. Mobilization for war was in many ways the principle issue of the period and questions of both foreign and domestic policy can best be understood in its context. Such questions fall into two broad camps. The first is physical – that is, harnessing and channeling the nation's economic, industrial and scientific powers toward waging war. The second is political – that is, gaining the people's consent and, ideally, their cooperation in mobilizing the nation and enduring war's inevitable hardships. Both aspects of Japan's mobilization were matters of great controversy and the military's encroachment on civilian society was opposed from many sides.

Those who had known Nakano in the 1920s were surprised by the fact that throughout the complex process of negotiating mobilization, he often sided with the army rather than the people. The liberal-democratic, populist and seemingly anti-military views he expressed during the 1920s led many to expect him, as an elected representative of the people, to resist the expansion of state and military power in the 1930s. Instead, he often took the army's side, helping clear the path for the expansion of the state's hold over its citizenry. Following the Great Depression, Nakano systematically abandoned essential elements of a liberalism that championed free markets, party politics and representative democracy. His about-face was so severe that, in early 1932, a political commentator wondered whether Nakano's "advocacy of democracy as star of the Minseitō had been only pretense."<sup>1</sup>

The policies Nakano came to embrace – including economic controls, a strengthened executive branch and a hard line in international relations – smacked of European fascism and

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<sup>1</sup> *Tokyo Asahi News*, around March 1932 following Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, from the Kenteki [硯滴] column, quoted in Inomata p. 349.

earned him the label “Japan’s Hitler”<sup>2</sup> as early as 1932. His affinity for the fascist ideology grew stronger in subsequent years, but it was only after meeting Mussolini and Hitler in the winter of 1937-8 that Nakano fully associated himself and his party with the European fascist movements. In the course of the 1930s, Nakano’s activities, and those of his party, produced the closest imitation of European fascist movements seen in Japan in the inter-war period, complete with uniforms, mass rallies, a youth organization, and talk of a “third way” in economics. Nakano and his followers also advocated that Japan form an alliance with the European axis powers.

This chapter traces the nature of, reasons for and consequences following Nakano’s ideological shift from liberalism to fascism, a process that began in 1929 and ended in 1938. The shift can be explained by global and domestic political changes as well as by deeper-lying internal continuities that span Nakano’s entire intellectual career.

### **Letting Go of Laissez-Faire**

The first component of liberal thought that Nakano abandoned was his belief in unfettered free markets - in the power of Adam Smith’s invisible hand to deliver ideal economic outcomes in the presence of a laissez-faire government. Without question, the most important factor in Nakano’s move away from classical liberal economics was the economic crisis of the late 1920s (which, in Japan, was preceded by the Shōwa banking crisis). The Great Depression threw economies around the world into disorder and its length, depth and severity put the efficacy of free markets into question. It seemed to be a disease against which the market’s self-healing powers were useless and for which liberal economics offered no cure. Classically liberal remedies implemented by the Hamaguchi cabinet, which in early 1929 returned Japan to the gold standard and debuted a public spending austerity program, seemed only to make things worse;

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<sup>2</sup> On February 1, 1932 the *Tokyo Daily News* [東京日日新聞] commented on Nakano’s leaving the Minseitō and his January 15 speech at the Japan Youth Hall under the heading: “Japan’s Hitler – Nakano Seigō” quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 644.

Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke's assurances to the opposite were rendered increasingly hollow as the economy sank deeper into recession. Echoing Keynes' famous dictum that government intervention was necessary in the short run because "in the long run we are all dead," Nakano wrote in 1931: "When statesmen talk about financial and economic policy, the one thing they should not forget is that the cells of which the national economy is comprised are the lives of the people. Long before their orthodox economic principles will show any effect, the lives of the people will have withered away and there will be nothing to be done about it."<sup>3</sup>

Nakano believed fervently that something else had to be done. As the Great Depression put orthodox liberalism into question, economists around the world proposed alternative policies. Nakano found food for thought among the ideas of G.D.H. Cole<sup>4</sup>. In 1929, Sugimori Kōjirō – a friend of Nakano's and a Waseda University professor of political science - had introduced Nakano to Cole's writings, in particular to "The Next Twenty Years of British Social and Economic Policy,"<sup>5</sup> in which Cole argued for a more interventionist stance in economic matters. Cole's ideas had heavily influenced Nakano's proposal for reorganizing Japan's telecommunications industry. Nakano subsequently had Cole's book translated into Japanese.<sup>6</sup> When the effects of the Great Depression reached Japan, Cole's interventionist ideas provided Nakano with the intellectual equipment to criticize the government's classical liberal position and formulate alternatives.

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<sup>3</sup> Nakano Seigō; "The Rebirth of Stagnant Japan" [沈滞日本の更生], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1931), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Cole, George Douglas Howard (1889 – 1959) socialist economist, political scientist, historian and author of numerous detective novels.

<sup>5</sup> George Douglas Howard Cole, "The Next Twenty Years of British Social and Economic Policy", (London: Macmillan, 1929).

<sup>6</sup> The Japanese translation of Cole's book, prepared by Shimizu Motohisa [清水元寿] and published in 1931 under the title "State control of the Economy" [経済の国家統制] (Tokyo, Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1931) owed its existence to Nakano, who had approached Senkura Publishing and recommended that the book be translated into Japanese. Nakano also contributed the preface to the Japanese translation.

Nakano's shift from a classical laissez-faire position to a more interventionist stance was gradual. As a member of the governing Minseitō and, especially, as a member of the government while serving as Parliamentary Vice-Minister in the Ministry of Communications, Nakano muffled his criticism. When, in July 1930, Nakano published a piece entitled "Economic Progress through National Controls," he carefully phrased his argument to ensure it would not read like a critique of Inoue's financial policy. Still, his insistence that only an "active industrial economic policy"<sup>7</sup> - i.e., state intervention in the market - could overcome the crisis was an early sign of his departure from liberal laissez-faire principles.

After resigning from the Communications Ministry, Nakano became more outspoken. The differences between his interventionist stance and the Minseitō mainstream's classical liberalism, and especially between Nakano's opinions and those of Finance Minister Inoue, made Nakano somewhat of an opposition force within the party. The increasing discord between Nakano and the party leaders is aptly illustrated in the May 1931 issue of the party organ "Minsei" [民政], which carried an Inoue speech reading: "There is no policy that will actively turn the present recession into an economic boom, and those [policies] that seem to do so will bring about a hundred evils and no good." Inoue's speech ran alongside an editorial by Nakano Seigō that suggested "the planned expansion of sweeping economic policy should be stressed."<sup>8</sup>

A collection of Nakano's essays from the summer of 1931, published subsequently as a book called "Rebirth of Stagnant Japan,"<sup>9</sup> show the extent to which Nakano had already departed

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<sup>7</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Economic Progress through National Controls" [国家統制の経済的進出], (Tokyo: Heibon-sha [平凡社], July, 1930), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Inoue Junnosuke [井上準之助], "Breaking out of the Present Crisis and the Continuation of a Contractionary Policy" [難局打開と緊縮方針の持続] and Nakano Seigō, "Reflections on the 59<sup>th</sup> Diet" [五十九第議会を顧みて] both in *Minsei*, May 1931.

<sup>9</sup> The articles had originally been published in the course of 1931 in the *Kokumin Shimbun* [国民新聞] and *Gaikō Jihō* [外交時報] and were then re-published in Nakano Seigō, "The Rebirth of Stagnant Japan" [沈滞日本の更生], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1931)

from both laissez-faire economics as well as the Minseitō mainstream long before he left the party at the end of 1932. The essays provide in-depth analyses of the causes of the Great Depression, the subsequent deepening of the economic crisis and the breakdown of international trade. In his writing, Nakano also unveiled various “active” - that is, interventionist - policy proposals to overcome the crisis. He believed that the crisis sprang, in essence, from global consumers’ weakened purchasing power. He blamed president Hoover - “a *nouveau riche* politician without education”<sup>10</sup> - for leading the US to adopt an economic policy that Nakano called “a mercantilist [重商主義], narrow-minded, national egoism that aims to enrich one’s own nation by sacrificing others.”<sup>11</sup> Following the stock market crash of October 1929, Hoover began raising trade tariffs to protect American industry, setting off a vicious cycle of rising tariffs, falling trade and depressed demand around the globe. As other nations followed the American example, these beggar-thy-neighbor policies led to the establishment of four economic blocs [大集団] - one American, one English, one French, and one Russian. Although Nakano saw the four blocs as different in some respects, he wrote that they all shared the basic aim of “autarky [自給自足], even as they jealously eyed each other.”<sup>12</sup>

Based on this analysis of the predicament in which Japan and the world found themselves, Nakano believed, first, that since the Great Depression had its origins in the United States, any solution also had to come from America. Ideally, he hoped the US government would cancel “the war debt and [abolish] tariffs on trade, which would as good for the world as it would be for the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

nation.”<sup>13</sup> Nakano acknowledged, however, that his proposal was not very realistic and, believing a global solution was unlikely, he proposed a regional solution for Japan.

His package, aimed at alleviating Japan’s domestic depression, included liberal policies such as lowering the land tax. The bulk of his proposals, however, were interventionist policies, such as government deficit spending on large infrastructure projects and the introduction of “a nationally controlled economic stimulus” [国家統制の経済発動] of strategic industries, especially the fertilizer, ship-building, iron, and automobile sectors.<sup>14</sup> Liberalism, which had previously been Nakano’s favored economic theory, had been replaced by “state-controlled capitalism” [統制資本主義].

The Great Depression also pushed Nakano to abandon his liberalism with respect to international economics. As one nation after another resorted to dumping, currency devaluation and protective trade tariffs, Nakano demanded that Japan’s leaders follow suit.<sup>15</sup> While he believed that “neither dumping nor high trade tariffs are phenomena to be welcomed,” Nakano recommended that Japan “react to the global competition by adopting emergency means and developing secret defensive policies.”<sup>16</sup> Nakano was aware that by following the global trend toward protectionist economic policies, Japan would only accelerate the erosion of international trade. He recognized and regretted that such policies would likely cause the global economy to

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 81-3. According to him, this nationally controlled stimulus would be “different from Adam Smith’s laissez-faire. Nor is the same as the traditional protectionism of capitalist privilege. Rather, by pointing the capital into the right direction, and putting this safely to work for national plans, we intend to put the profit motive into the service of the nation’s masses’ welfare.” Ibid., p. 48-49.

<sup>15</sup> England’s decision to abrogate the Treaty of Commerce between Japan and India and thus close Indian markets to Japanese goods seems to have angered Nakano more than any other. Repeatedly, he deplored the impact that this had on business in Kansai (where his constituency was placed). See Nakano Seigō, “Indicator of National Reconstruction” [国家改造の指標], speech held in Hibiya Public Hall, Tokyo, on November 2, 1933; reprinted in “Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛氏大演説集], (Tokyo: Asakaze-sha [朝風社]), 1936, p. 10-11.

<sup>16</sup> Both quotes from Nakano Seigō; “The Rebirth of Stagnant Japan”, p. 24.

disintegrate into regional economic blocs, but argued that Japan's self-preservation left it with no choice but to build its own economic bloc.

After leaving the Minseitō at the end of 1932, Nakano criticized liberal economics ever more openly<sup>17</sup> while advocating active state intervention. Ironically, however, he opposed the economic controls the government introduced following the outbreak of war with China in 1937 on the grounds that they suffocated economic life.

### **From International Cooperation to Unilateralism**

The second major shift in Nakano's thinking during the years in which he gravitated toward fascism concerned Japan's position in the world. Nakano had never approved of the post-WW1 global order that had been codified in the treaties of Versailles, Washington and London, as well as in the covenant of the League of Nations. He believed the treaties and the covenant cemented an unjust international order that served the Western Powers' interests while restricting Japan's development and independence. As we have seen, Nakano believed during the 1920s in two possibilities for rectifying this global wrong – either the Powers willingly renounced their respective Monroe Doctrines<sup>18</sup> and granted all nations access to the markets and goods of the territories under their control, or Japan established its own sphere of exclusive influence and

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<sup>17</sup> Thus, in a speech held January 15, 1932 Nakano said: “While I was still in the Minseitō, I criticized the Shidehara diplomacy and Inoue's financial policy. ... With respect to domestic politics our view was that we should move away from liberalism and towards a controlled economy [統制経済]. I said these things while being in the Minseitō, but now that I have left the party, I can say them more freely.” Nakano Seigō, “The Real Political Situation and the Direction of our Movement” [政局の真相と吾徒の動向] speech held on January 15, 1932 at the Japan Youth Hall [日本青年館] subsequently published in “Trends of Japan in Transition” [転換日本の動向] January 20, 1932. The speech is quoted in NY, vol. 1, p. 640-41.

<sup>18</sup> According to Nakano not only the US, but also England and France had Monroe Doctrines. He deplored that state of affairs and advocated that Japan too should declare her own Monroe Doctrine to establish her sphere of interest in East Asia. See Nakano Seigō, “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction” [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], October 1933), p. 132-140.



declared a Far Eastern Monroe Doctrine.<sup>19</sup> Sometime around 1930, however, Nakano came to believe that global cooperation had become a naïve dream and unilateral action an imperative.

Since all the powers were about to “create their own economic blocs through political power,”<sup>20</sup> Nakano believed “Japan should quickly sweep away China’s worries and start building an Asian bloc based on [the two countries’] common aspirations.”<sup>21</sup> By mid-1931, Nakano concluded that: “Laissez-faire in economics and indifference in diplomacy are the tranquil dreams of a former era. Neither is suited to effect the transformations of a world threatened by an economic crisis.”<sup>22</sup> In a world where international cooperation had disintegrated, Japan should “emancipate [解放] itself from the standard of English diplomacy and establish its own independent foreign policy.”<sup>23</sup>

Nakano thereafter became a pronounced advocate of unilateral action in international relations. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his stance toward the Manchurian Incident, an event Nakano and many of his compatriots welcomed. Was the occupation of Manchuria not the first step toward building an East Asian economic bloc, the construction of which Nakano had come to see as necessary for Japan’s survival? He accordingly urged Prime Minister Wakatsuki in the fall of 1931 to support the army’s schemes on the mainland and not to fear any retaliation from the Western Powers, let alone from China.<sup>24</sup> Nakano celebrated Japan’s escape from the entanglement of the international treaty system:

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<sup>19</sup> For the concept of Far Eastern Monroe Doctrine and the shift that it signaled in Japanese politics see James Crowley, “Japan’s Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930 - 1938”, (Princeton, 1966), p. 195.

<sup>20</sup> Nakano Seigō; “The Rebirth of Stagnant Japan”, p. 87-88.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.118.

<sup>23</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 607 and following.

<sup>24</sup> According to Nakano, Japan should not fear any military intervention or even an economic embargo by the Western powers who had more than enough “problems in their own kitchen” and neither “spare time or

“Japan was tied down by these unnatural bonds...The rotten ropes of the West were binding [Japan], but the Yamato people continued to grow even as they were bound and they eventually ripped the rotten ropes that tied them...This is what happened on September 18... The Incident of September 18 taught the European people that the Yamato race cannot be bound by a rotten Western-style rope for eternity.”<sup>25</sup>

Once Nakano saw that unilateral action produced results, there was no stopping him. As the Guandong Army tried to cement its position by establishing a separate state, effectively compromising China’s territorial integrity, Nakano – completely contrary to all his prior cautions against antagonizing Chinese nationalism - campaigned for the speedy recognition of the new state.<sup>26</sup> Holding a speech occasioned by the visit of Komai Tokuzō<sup>27</sup>, head of general affairs of Manchūoku, who had come to Tokyo in early August 1932, Nakano urged Japan’s leaders to stop hesitating and to recognize Manchūoku unilaterally:

“The aspirations of 30 million people hoping to establish a nation without exploitation, and the dream of the Japanese people to build a Far-Eastern economic bloc that will contribute to world peace, have come together in a perfect match...Now it all depends on whether or not Japan recognizes Manchūoku and pours its energy into that country...It must be our unshakable conviction that a firm attitude on Japan’s side will have the power to determine the decisions of all the Powers and China. In that sense, I

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money ... to interfere in a fight between Japan and China.” Nakano Seigō, in a speech titled “The Real Political Situation and the Direction of our Movement” [政局の真相と吾徒の動向] held on January 15, 1932 and quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 607-08.

<sup>25</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction”, p. 153-54.

<sup>26</sup> Nakano’s campaigning on behalf of the government of Manchūoku was not without self-interest. A few weeks before Komai’s visit, Nakano had welcomed a delegation of the Manchūoku government, including Ting Chien-hsiu [丁鑑修], his former class mate at Waseda and now head of Manchūoku’s communication department, from whom he received Yen 100,000. See Komai Tokuzō [駒井徳三], “A Look behind the Scenes of Political Fund Raising” [政治資金の楽屋裏]; part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in “Japan and the Japanese” [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 18-21.

<sup>27</sup> Komai Tokuzō [駒井徳三] (1885 - 1961), central figure in the establishment of Manchūoku.

believe that we should do away with all hesitation and speedily recognize the state of Manchūoku.”<sup>28</sup>

In the spring of 1933, a week before the matter went to the League of Nations for deliberation, Nakano demanded that if the League refused to recognize Manchūoku, “Japan should withdraw as quickly as possible from the League of Nations and be ready to uphold its honor in isolation.”<sup>29</sup>

From the Manchurian Incident onward, Nakano argued consistently that Japan push ahead unilaterally in pursuit of its aims and disregard foreign opposition. Only after hostilities with China erupted in the summer of 1937 and it became clear that Japan could not settle the conflict on its own did Nakano consider returning to some form of international cooperation. When he did so, however, he sought partnerships with nations that, like Japan, existed on the fringes of the international community as defined by the post-WWI treaty system - namely, with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

### **Embracing Armed Force**

The Manchurian Incident also convinced Nakano of the effectiveness of military force. As late as mid-1931, Nakano still held out hope that Japan could attain its goals peacefully. He wrote that, in dealing with the other Powers, Japan should avoid “confronting them as enemies. [敵対]”<sup>30</sup> Regarding Japan’s Asian neighbors, Nakano wrote:

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<sup>28</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Advocating the Speedy Recognition of Manchūoku” [満州国即時承認を高調す] speech held at Tokyo Kaikan on August 2, 1932 reproduced under the same title in *Gakan*, September 1932, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> Nakano Seigō in “Facing the Withdrawal from the League of Nations” [連盟脱退に直面して] speech held on February 21, 1932 at Hibiya Public Hall, reproduced in “Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛氏大演説集], (Tokyo: Asakaze-sha [朝風社]), 1936, p. 141.

<sup>30</sup> Nakano Seigō; “The Rebirth of Stagnant Japan”, p. 113.

“Japan’s foreign policy must not become...colonial [侵略主義]. Japan has to organically organize the co-existence and co-prosperity [共存共栄組織] of China, Manchuria, Mongolia, ... Siberia, and Japan by supporting their economic interests. When making demands Japan must base them on order. In choosing its means, Japan must be active.”<sup>31</sup>

The events of September 1931 changed Nakano’s stance on Japan’s relations with its Asian neighbors. His tone became more martial and confrontational, and his proposals for how Japan ought to deal with Chinese nationalism increasingly included the threat of military force. He supported the Japanese army’s advance into northern China in the first half of the 1930s and, after the outbreak of hostilities between Japan and China in the summer of 1937, he advocated the escalation of the conflict. After France and the Netherlands fell in 1940, Nakano advocated taking possession of their colonies in South East Asia.

Nakano reassured himself and others that Japan’s aggressive foreign policies would go unchallenged.<sup>32</sup> His confidence came, in part, from the Powers’ weak responses to the Manchurian Incident, as well as to Italy’s war against Ethiopia and to Germany’s occupation of the Rhineland.<sup>33</sup> Nakano also reckoned that, with each territorial addition, Japan would become stronger and hence more capable of handling future military or economic challenges. Crucially, he overlooked the fact that, long before adding to the nation’s strength, territorial conquests would amplify the nation’s weakness by draining its resources.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> To name just one example: On September 10, of 1936 Nakano predicted that a war between Japan and China would not escalate into a world war. See Nakano Seigō, “The Bandits in the Mountains and the Bandits in the Heart” [山中の賊と心中の賊] memorial address held on September 10, 1936 at the Japan Youth Hall on behalf of two journalists of the *Tokyo Daily News* killed in an anti-Japanese incident and reprinted under the title “The Pillar of East Asia: Japan” [東洋の支柱、日本], in in *Collected Speeches* by Nakano Seigō [中野正剛氏大演説集], Tokyo, Asakaze-sha [朝風社], 1936, see p. 420.

<sup>33</sup> According to Nakano, the Abyssinian crisis and the ensuing Second Italo-Abyssinian War showed that the League of Nations embargo could not be enforced effectively. See Nakano Seigō, Editorial: The Confrontation between England and Italy, in *Gakan*, October 1935, p. 2-4.

Nakano's shift in attitude regarding the use and efficacy of armed force brought with it a new attitude toward the armed forces themselves. Where in the past Nakano had repeatedly resisted military interference in politics, he now took the opposite position in select instances. In the 1934 debate over the army's publication of a pamphlet, which many considered interference in politics, Nakano came to the army's defense, arguing that the pamphlet contained nothing new and was merely educational.<sup>34</sup> He also sympathized with the army rebels of February 26, 1936.<sup>35</sup> In the debate over Saitō Takao's May 1936 speech – which attacked the army's continued interference in politics following the February 26 incident and cautioned (rightly) against the possibility of a military dictatorship – Nakano again sided with the army. He chided Saitō for a formalistic application of the law against “those elements in and out of the army trying to reform the Japanese political system by illegal means” and disagreed with the more principled Saitō on the grounds that:

“Today's reforms are not legal but political in nature. They are not about administering the given laws but about the necessity of making new laws...Saitō represents simply and directly the opinion of formalistic legalism and conservatism, dismisses restructuring and reforms as the talk of ‘political outcasts and social dropouts’, and states that there is no need for reforms in today's Japan...I cannot agree with the short-sighted opinion that all we must do is apply the law strictly and punish mercilessly in order to discipline the army and bring peace to society.”<sup>36</sup>

The shift in Nakano's attitude toward the military has led some observers to label him a militarist, but it should be remembered that Nakano never gave up his principled distinction

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<sup>34</sup> See Oates, p. 68; quoting Kampō Gōgai [官報号外] 2 December, 1934 p. 77. See also Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Gakan*, January 1935, p. 2-5.

<sup>35</sup> When on February 26, 1936 young officers staged a *coup d'état* Nakano talked about distributing hot soup to the rebels but did not do it. After the suppression of the rebellion, Nakano tried to purchase the rebels' flag which Ishiwara Kanji had collected from the battle field. After Kita Ikki's execution, Kita's followers presented Nakano with parts of the former's furniture. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 131, 146 and p. 270.

<sup>36</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, June 1936, p. 5.

between political and military affairs. Even during 1936-7, the heyday of his efforts as a parliamentary representative of the army reformers, Nakano stressed that he and his party would be “in charge of national defense in the broader sense,” while the military would be responsible for “national defense in the narrow sense.”<sup>37</sup>

### **New Friends and Allies**

The shift in Nakano’s political views that was triggered by the Manchurian Incident also pushed Nakano to form friendships and alliances with figures he had shunned previously. After Matsuoka Yōsuke, Japan’s ambassador to the League of Nations, returned to Japan as a hero for orchestrating Japan’s withdrawal from the League, Nakano sought him out. The two men met several times in meetings noted by the media.<sup>38</sup> Though Matsuoka and Nakano continued advocating similar policies in following years (e.g. an alliance with Germany on the eve of WW2), their relationship never developed beyond these few meetings in 1933, likely because of a lack of personal chemistry.

More important and lasting was Nakano’s relationship with Colonel Ishiwara Kanji. In the 1920s, Nakano was known as an enemy of important military figures such as Tanaka and Katsura, but in the early 30s he began drawing closer to Ishiwara, an architect of the Manchurian Incident who was one of Japan’s foremost military strategic thinkers. Initially, Nakano’s desire to associate with Ishiwara was probably motivated by the hope of sharing some of the glory Ishiwara had earned for his involvement in the Manchurian Incident. If that was the case, however, the motivation was soon supplanted by genuine intellectual appreciation for Ishiwara’s thought. As Nakano came under Ishiwara’s influence, military strategic thinking and geopolitics -

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<sup>37</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead” [時論：東方会は斯く進む], in *Tōtairiku*, June may 1937, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> For more details on the relationship between Matsuoka and Nakano as well as the media’s coverage see Inomata p. 348-9.

which had hitherto played only a minor role in Nakano's writing - came to feature more prominently.<sup>39</sup> Among Nakano's many political alliances in the years 1932-7, his association with Ishiwara was among the most important. While Nakano acted as Ishiwara's mouthpiece in the Diet, Ishiwara supported Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank by orchestrating the foundation of a Tōhōkai chapter in Sendai.<sup>40</sup> Collaboration between the two men reached a climax in 1936-7, when Ishiwara's influence was at its height, but thereafter disintegrated over disagreements concerning the war with China.

### **Abandoning the Established Parties and Parliamentary Democracy**

In mid-1931, Nakano still believed the policies he proposed could and would be carried out by the established political parties - ideally by the Minseitō, of which he was still a member. He still adhered to what he once called "Diet-centered politics," which aimed for party cabinets, and he still engaged in political battles between the two major established parties. It was not the Manchurian Incident itself that caused Nakano to change his opinion but rather the established parties' failure to react to the situation - in particular, their failure to establish a coalition cabinet strong enough to regain control. While Nakano welcomed the occupation of Manchuria and the establishment of Manshūkoku, it did not escape him that movement's driving force was not the government in Tokyo but rather radical young officers in the field acting independently. Based on his understanding of Wang Yang-ming's teachings, Nakano condoned and even praised the

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<sup>39</sup> See for example Nakano Seigō, "The New Power of the Air Force" [空軍の新威力], in *Gakan*, October 1935.

<sup>40</sup> After returning to Japan from Manchuria, Ishiwara was stationed in Sendai. Even though as a member of the armed forces he was barred from political activities, Ishiwara guided from behind the scenes the foundation of a political group [政治結社] called "Tōhōkai." In due time, this Sendai Tōhōkai was to become the Sendai chapter of Nakano's Tōhōkai. See Police Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior [内務省警保局], "Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Police" [特高月報], December 1933, no.2; p. 53-5. and October 1934, p. 43-44.

Incident's two main architects, Colonel Ishiwara Kanji and Colonel Itagaki Seishirō. Years later, Nakano wrote:

“I have always admired [賛美] those responsible at the time, even worshipped [崇拜] them. It is possible that I will never have the fortune in the course of my life to accomplish such a great feat, but as part of my effort to cultivate my mind I pray day and night that if I am given the opportunity to achieve something great, I will be able to do so with the same motivation and resolve as Ishiwara and Itagaki.”<sup>41</sup>

In his euphoria, Nakano overlooked the fact that these acts of subordination set a dangerous precedent that could (and would) lead to a breakdown of discipline in the Japanese Army. What Nakano did not overlook was that by taking independent action, the officers in the field had wrested political initiative from Tokyo and that, at least in this instance, the government - still a Minseitō cabinet – was not leading but rather following events. To ensure that such insubordination remained an isolated incident and would not result in a shift of Japan's political center of gravity, Nakano sought initially to help the Minseito regain political initiative. His feverish activity in the fall of 1931 to help establish a coalition cabinet between the two established parties was motivated by the hope of bringing the Minseitō, and the Adachi faction especially, back into positions of power. On a more general level, it was also an attempt to return the established parties to the center of politics.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The Bandits in the Mountains and the Bandits in the Heart” [山中の賊と心中の賊] reprinted under the title “The Pillar of East Asia: Japan” [東洋の支柱、日本], in *Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō* [中野正剛氏大演説集], Tokyo, Asakaze-sha [朝風社], 1936, p. 383.

<sup>42</sup> It is doubtful whether Nakano who enthusiastically supported the idea of a coalition government, really shared Wakatsuki's hope that this cabinet would then actually discipline the insubordinate army, for Nakano basically agreed with the occupation of Manchuria. In fact, in a conversation with Wakatsuki Nakano suggested that any future cabinet should not discipline the army, but instead coordinate the actions of the foreign service with those of the army (i.e. the foreign service should explain the army's actions), for otherwise “The foreign service would make promises that the army was bound to break.” Nakano Seigō, “The Real Political Situation and the Direction of our Movement” speech held on January 15, 1932 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 612.



When the attempt to establish a coalition government strong enough to reign in the insubordinate army failed at the end of 1931, however, Nakano was quick to withdraw from the Minseitō and give up on the established parties altogether. In doing so, Nakano not only reacted to the established parties' decline, but also accelerated it.

After leaving the Minseitō, Nakano criticized the established parties ever more severely, to the point of denying them their basic function as representatives of the people. In a speech at the end of 1933, he said: "The established parties are struggling. They are struggling and they have entirely lost their leadership over the people... They have decided to no longer call things by their name."<sup>43</sup> The parties' reticence came "partly from the fact that they are cowards, but mostly because they have nothing to say."<sup>44</sup>

At the same time, Nakano felt that "the masses require action" and that "the people wait for leadership."<sup>45</sup> Since the established parties were "useless when it comes to meeting the requests of the people and executing great reforms in and out of Japan,"<sup>46</sup> Nakano demanded that those among "Japan's politicians who have lost power to lead the masses retreat from public life."<sup>47</sup> He even predicted that the parties "would be kicked out of the world if they failed to act."<sup>48</sup>

Who or what could fill the void if the major parties dissolved? Nakano saw two possibilities. First, if the popular will did not find a legal means of expression, it would turn to

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<sup>43</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Indicator of National Reconstruction" [国家改造の指標], speech held November 2, 1933; reprinted in "Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛氏大演説集], (Tokyo: Asakaze-sha [朝風社]), 1936, p. 4-5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. but also quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 769.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. but also quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 770-71.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. but also quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 769.

violence: “If you leave frustrations unanswered, there is always the risk that they may explode. The less organized popular reforms are, the more destructive that explosion will be.”<sup>49</sup> Nakano believed that the series of independent acts and terrorist incidents that shook Japan’s political establishment in the 1930s had to be seen in this light. According to Nakano, the radical activists were expressing the will of the people, as evidenced by the fact that the activists had won the people’s sympathy.<sup>50</sup> He explained and justified their acts by stating: “In today’s Japan, there is no political force organized as a group that leads trends. The people therefore start to act on their own. It is because there is no legal popular movement that illegal direct action is planned.”<sup>51</sup> As much as Nakano sympathized with the radicals’ aims, however, he did not share their violent means. Unlike them, he sought to effect political change legally.

Nakano’s preferred option for filling the void left by the political parties’ vacuum was therefore the creation of a new kind of mass-based party that would take the established parties’ place. Like the established parties, it would have representatives in the Diet, but it would also be rooted in a “legal popular movement”<sup>52</sup> outside the Diet. This combination would give the new party the strength necessary to effect political change. As an alternative to the destructive explosion Nakano foresaw if the popular will were left unanswered, he hoped that “if the various social forces are organized into groups and proceed as a public movement, secret conspiracies

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<sup>49</sup> Nakano Seigō, Nakano Seigō, “Indicator of National Reconstruction” [国家改造の指標], speech held in Hibiya Public Hall, Tokyo, on November 2, 1933; reprinted in “Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛氏大演説集], (Tokyo: Asakaze-sha [朝風社]), 1936, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> Later Nakano would go one step further and state that the Manchurian Incident, Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations, and the abrogation of international treaties limiting arms were all “carried out by the people themselves.” [国民がやった]. See Nakano’s farewell speech before leaving for Europe held November 11, 1937 at the Gunji Kaikan in Kudanshita, reprinted in Nakano Seigō, “Upon Departing” [出遊に臨みて], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1937, p. 97-113, the quote is taken from page 102.

<sup>51</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Indicator of National Reconstruction”, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> Nakano Seigō, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1. p. 770.

will disappear and turn into an open movement.”<sup>53</sup> Confronted “by the state’s internal instability ... and difficulties from abroad,” Nakano called on “the mass of the people ... to stand up.” He appealed to:

“the workers, the farmers, the main productive forces, and, in addition, ... engineers and salaried persons - ...to organize according to their occupational functions and to bring these associations together [to create] a national organization that then becomes the core of the national popular movement.”<sup>54</sup>

Nakano’s rejection of the established parties went hand in hand with his criticism of the very workings of parliamentary democracy. The earliest signs of this pairing can be found in a piece Nakano wrote in 1932:

“In times of national emergencies or national crises, it does not have to be the majority [that makes political decisions]...The regular procedures of constitutional government, universal suffrage and democracy are only means, but the real ends [lit. 本質 = real qualities] lie deeper than that. I believe that we are in a period of time when, in order to achieve these real ends, one may have to do out-of-the-ordinary things.”<sup>55</sup>

Within a year, Nakano demanded the establishment of a strong executive government unfettered by parliamentary checks on power, thus abandoning the central piece of his former liberal convictions. By 1938, he put even more firmly into question the majority principle so fundamental to democratic decision-making:

“Democracy has lost its spirit and turned into a mere mechanism...It won’t do for a majority to gather their voices. Casting your vote alone won’t do either. Human beings

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<sup>53</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Indicator of National Reconstruction”, p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>55</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Trends of Japan in Transition” [転換日本の動向], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1932), p. 75-76.

have to gather organically one by one, hold the same ideals and the same feelings...and only then can we speak of a popular organization.”<sup>56</sup>

As Nakano questioned the essence of parliamentary democracy and rejected the established parties outright, he returned to his pet project of establishing a mass party – the vision with which he had entered politics in 1920. During the remainder of his life, he sank his time and energy into this dream’s realization.

### **Emulating the European Fascist Parties**

When Nakano left the Minseitō in December 1931, the idea of establishing a new mass party modeled on European fascist parties was already circulating among Nakano, Adachi and the seven ex-Minseitō members who had followed them.<sup>57</sup> At that stage, however, the matter was far from decided.<sup>58</sup> While Nakano and his followers were all for it, the Adachi faction and, most importantly, Adachi himself pursued the idea only half-heartedly, hoping instead for a chance to return to the Minseitō. A general election scheduled for February 20, 1932, moreover, made campaign preparation a far more pressing task than establishing a new party.

Stuck between his desire to create a new party and the need to maintain some sort of cohesion with the other dissenters, Nakano took a somewhat ambivalent position. On one hand, he tried keeping the door open for a return to the Minseitō at some later stage. Traveling to Fukuoka in early January 1932, Nakano gave a 90-minute speech at the Minseitō Fukuoka

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<sup>56</sup> Nakano Seigō in his speech at the first Tōhōkai party convention, December 9, 1938 reproduced in “On the occasion of the Tōhōkai’s First National Convention” [東方会第一回全国大会に臨みて], in *Tōtairiku*, March, 1939, p. 9

<sup>57</sup> The seven Minseitō members to leave the party with Adachi and Nakano at the end of 1931 were Sugiura Takeo [杉浦武雄], Tanaka Kiyotatsu [田中養達], Miura Torao [三浦虎雄], Yutani Yoshiharu [由谷義治], Kazami Akira [風見章], Okano Ryūichi [岡野龍一], and Kangyū Tsuneo [簡牛凡夫]. Tomita Kōjirō [富田幸次郎] also left the Minseitō around this time, but soon returned.

<sup>58</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], January 12, 1932.

chapter's New Year's party, in which he requested members' support in the upcoming election and reassured them that, though he had "left the Minseitō," there still "remained a deep connection to the party that I cannot cut, no matter how much I try."<sup>59</sup> Nakano's efforts paid off handsomely. His Fukuoka supporters remained loyal – the evening ended with three shouts of "Nakano Banzai!" – and in the February election Nakano was duly returned to his Diet seat.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, Nakano also began toying publicly with the idea of creating a new mass party. In a speech at the Japan Youth Hall on January 15, 1932, Nakano posed a rhetorical question about whether he intended to start a new party. He answered: "I would do it at once if I had more power," adding that, for the time being, he was only "testing the air."<sup>61</sup>

At this stage, Nakano remained vague on the question of where the party would stand ideologically. Stating that his position could be best described as "Social Nationalism" (using, alternately, the terms *sōsharu nashonarizumu* [ソーシャル・ナショナルリズム] and *shakai kokumin-shugi* [社会国民主義]), Nakano sketched the broad outlines of a "nationalism that focuses on this society"<sup>62</sup> but that differed from National Socialism (what he called "State Socialism" [ステート・ソーシャルリズム or 社会国家主義]).<sup>63</sup> He also distinguished Social Nationalism from socialism, which he considered economically unviable, and from international

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<sup>59</sup> Nakano Seigō during his speech held at New Year's Party of Fukuoka Chapter of Minseitō on January 3, 1932, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 643.

<sup>60</sup> Nakano was returned comfortably with 19,557 votes, the second highest in his electoral district. The three other seats of Fukuoka went to candidates of the Seiyūkai. For Nakano's election results see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 645.

<sup>61</sup> Nakano Seigō, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 640-41.

<sup>62</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Trends of Japan in Transition", p. 72-73.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. Nakano Yasuo points out correctly, that Nakano used different Japanese terms for the English "nation", translating it with "Kokumin" [国民] (stressing the people making up a nation) when describing his position, but using "Kokka" [国家] (referring to the statist character of a nation) when explaining European National Socialism. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 643.

capitalism, which he considered racist and unfair.<sup>64</sup> If Nakano's intention with these distinctions was to set himself apart from German National Socialism, however, he clearly failed, for the *Tokyo Asahi News* ran an article around this time under the headline "Nakano Seigō – Japan's Hitler."<sup>65</sup>

As the new party took form in the course of 1932, Nakano clarified his hazy and rudimentary pronouncements. Contrasting his Social Nationalism with the ideologies of Japan's traditional right- and left-wing parties, Nakano wrote:

"The traditional right-wing factions are mostly concerned with the nation. As for the elements that form the nation, they lean toward the privileged classes, while their awareness of the social masses was insufficient. The traditional proletarian parties, on the other hand, are mostly concerned about the proletarian masses and lacked awareness of international and national affairs. Their reaction to the Manchurian Incident - namely their absolute opposition to it as an act of imperialistic aggression - proves that they have not understood that the masses depend on the nation and that the nation works within an international context. The Social Nationalist party I envision pays attention to international affairs, national affairs, the masses, and the fair distribution of production; it will aim to harmonize, organize and regulate these in a nationalistic manner."<sup>66</sup>

By positioning himself in opposition to both the traditional right and the traditional left, Nakano followed the example of European fascism, which cast itself as a third way between socialism and capitalism.

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<sup>64</sup> On a different occasions, Nakano defined his new "Social Nationalist Party" [社会国民党] as "opposing monopoly financial capital" as well as "opposing the established parties." See Nakano Seigō, "The Characteristics of Social Nationalism" 「ソシヤル・ナシヨナリズムの色彩にて, in Kaizō [改造], February 1932.

<sup>65</sup> *Tokyo Asahi News*, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1932. More analytical observers however were aware of the differences between Nakano's position and German national socialism. The People's Lecture League [国民講座連合社] published a little booklet around the same time intended to educate the people on the subject of fascism and in it described Nakano's position in terms very similar to those he himself used setting it apart from national socialism. See People's Lecture League [国民講座連合社]; What is fascism [ファツシヨて何んだ], (Tokyo, 1933), p. 45.

<sup>66</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Trends of Japan in Transition", p. 74-75.

Adachi's and Nakano's initial understanding of the new party was that it would be modeled on European fascist parties, and that Adachi would be the party's head while Nakano ran its platform and ideology. As Nakano busied himself fulfilling his end of the bargain, formulating the outlines of Social Nationalism in the first half of 1932, Adachi dragged his feet long after election campaigning ceased to be a credible excuse, largely because he and his followers continued hoping they could return to the Meinseitō.<sup>67</sup> Only when all of Adachi's attempts to return to the Minseitō failed and eight members of his faction were forced to leave the party in June 1932 did he finally commit himself to the new party.<sup>68</sup> Preparations for the new party's debut then began in earnest.

Casting itself as a gathering place for all those who had moved away from their former democratic or social democratic beliefs after the Manchurian Incident and who now could loosely be labeled "Social Nationalists," the nascent party soon attracted four members from the Kakushintō [革新党],<sup>69</sup> the successor of the Kakushin Club [革新倶楽部], as well as an unaffiliated MP named Matsutani Yojirō.<sup>70</sup> Over the course of the summer of 1932, the National

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<sup>67</sup> Most notably in this context were Yamaji Jōichi [山道襄一], Furuya Yoshitaka [古屋慶隆], and Koike Jinrō [小池仁郎] who with the help of the young members of the Adachi faction started a campaign to have Adachi reinstated into the party. Support for Adachi's reinstatement was strong both within and without the party. However, the party executive took a hard stance opposing this movement and was thus able to silence the Adachi faction. See the *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], June 20, 21, 22, 1932.

<sup>68</sup> These were Yamaji Jōichi [山道襄一], Furuya Yoshitaka [古屋慶隆], Katō Tai'ichi [加藤鯛一], Nonaka Tetsuya [野中徹也], Satō Kei [佐藤啓], Fukamizu Kiyoshi [深水清], Izu Tomito [伊豆富人], and Koyama Tanizō [小山谷蔵], all of whom had to leave the party after failing to reinstate Adachi. See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], July 2, 1932.

<sup>69</sup> Originally, Nakano had hoped that the new party would be joined by Ōtake Kan'ichi [大竹貫一], Kiyose Ichirō [清瀬一郎], Suzuki Shōgo [鈴木正吾], Akamatsu Katsumaro [赤松克麿], Shimonaka Yasaburō [下中弥三郎], and Shimanaka Yūzō [嶋中雄三] who at that time were making their switch from Social Democracy [社会民主主義] to National Socialism [国家社会主義] but two of the Kakushintō members, namely Akamatsu and Shimonaka, did not join Nakano, instead creating their own independent party, "National Socialist Party" [国民社会党]. See *Sanyō Shimpō* [参陽新報], April 13, 1932.

<sup>70</sup> Matsutani Yojirō [松谷与二郎] (1880 - 1937), social activist and politician.

Policy Research Club [国策研究倶楽部], from which the new party was to emerge, met regularly and agreed on the party's name - Kokumin Dōmei [国民同盟] or National League - and its platform, which was by and large determined by Nakano and his followers.

The party's program contained three broad principles: the re-establishment of international justice, the establishment of a controlled economy and the full realization of popular politics [国民政治の徹底].<sup>71</sup> The first principle articulated Nakano's belief that the post-WWI international order was an "Anglo-Saxon-Centered Peace" and argued for "world-wide territorial revision."<sup>72</sup>

The second principle was to be realized by establishing an Economic General Staff to impose controls on the most important national industries (including coal, steel, electricity, banking, and others), and to manage foreign exchange and trade. The "controlled economy" plank also advocated maintaining low interest rates, redistributing income through fiscal reforms, protecting non-monopolistic sectors (such as small and medium enterprises as well as agriculture), and, finally, forming an economic bloc between Japan and Manchuria.<sup>73</sup>

The third principle - the "full realization of popular government" - was not only an aim but was also a means of achieving the first two principles, for only a strong popular government would be able to carry out the reforms Nakano envisioned. Concretely, this third plank entailed abolishing the cabinet system and concentrating domestic, foreign and military matters in the hands of a Board of National Affairs.

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<sup>71</sup> See the *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1932 or Adachi Kenzō, "Autobiography of Adachi Kenzō" [安達謙蔵自叙伝], (Tokyo, 1960), p. 331.

<sup>72</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "The Characteristics of Social Nationalism" [ソシヤル・ナシヨナリズムの色彩にて] in *Kaizō*, [改造], 1932.

<sup>73</sup> See the *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], December 18 and 20, 1932.



The National League's formal foundation ceremony took place on December 22, 1932, at Hibiya Public Hall in Tokyo. Over four thousand party members from across Japan attended.<sup>74</sup> The factionalism that had delayed the party's foundation persisted despite myriad declarations and speeches calling for unity amid crisis. The party's core members – the two upper house members and the 33 lower-house members (29 former Minseitō members, three former Kakushintō members and one formerly unaffiliated parliament member) - were divided into two rival groups.

The smaller of these groups was comprised of politicians who had left the Minseitō under Nakano's leadership in late 1931.<sup>75</sup> Responsible for the formulation of the party's platform and ideology, and boasting some background in mass mobilization, this group was particularly committed to realizing “popular politics” - that is, to creating a mass party with power bases outside the traditional power structures.

The other group, led by Yamaji, was comprised of members who joined the Kokumin Dōmei a full six months later, and then only because they were forced to leave the Minseitō. Not really committed to establishing a new party, let alone a new type of mass party, their participation in Nakano's mass mobilization activities was lukewarm at best. While the Nakano faction aimed to create something new, the Yamaji faction seemed more intent on reviving something old, something they had lost - namely, their place within the Minseitō. In subsequent years, Yamaji tried more than once to negotiate agreements in which Adachi and/or the Yamaji

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<sup>74</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], December 23, 1932.

<sup>75</sup> Of those Minseitō members who had left with Nakano at the end of 1931, Sugiura, Tanaka, Miura, Okano, and Kangyū all failed to be reelected in the election of 1932. Therefore only Nakano, Kazami, and Yutani were left from the original batch. They were joined by Washizawa Yoshiji [鷲沢与四二], Mori Mineichi [森峰一], and Toda Yumi [戸田由美], who left the Minseitō in the summer of 1932. The two ex-MPs Watanabe Yasukuni [渡辺泰邦] and Yamauchi Ryō [山内亮] were also considered to be part of the Nakano faction.

faction and/or the entire Kokumin Dōmei would have cooperated with the government or the Minseitō. Nakano consistently opposed these attempts.

These fundamental divisions were on full display at the founding ceremony in December 1932. Fashion tells the tale best. In imitation of the European fascist parties, Nakano and his followers wanted all party officials to wear a black uniform<sup>76</sup> and carry the party's flag, which showed the "Sacred Mirror [one of the three imperial regalia] and an eagle on purple ground." Uncomfortable with fascist pomp, party president Adachi refused to wear such a "silly thing" [そんなツマランものは着られん] and attended the ceremony in a *hakama* with a traditional crest.<sup>77</sup> Undaunted, Nakano and his followers showed up in uniform and their appearance, more than anything else, led a newspaper reporting on the event to describe the group as the first "Japanese-style fascist party" [和風ファッショ党].<sup>78</sup> In subsequent years, Adachi managed to bridge this fundamental division within the Kokumin Dōmei, but it resurfaced periodically and led eventually to the party's dissolution.

### **Creating a Mass Party**

With the party's founding and other organizational matters completed by the end of 1932, Nakano set out to bring his dream of a new mass party to life. Animating the vision required two things: creating a popular movement to serve as the party's power base and formulating a coherent party ideology.

Nakano made various attempts to create a mass movement, some of which are hard to take seriously, such as enlisting his wife to attend research meetings at which methods of preparing

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<sup>76</sup> The uniforms were black serge suits, came with two breast pockets an arm band and cost about 22 Yen a piece. It did not take long before the press labeled them "fascio uniforms." See Inomata, p. 345

<sup>77</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], December 21, 1932.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Inomata, p. 345.

nourishing dishes for the masses from inexpensive food items were demonstrated.<sup>79</sup> More to the point, in April 1933, Nakano established the party's youth organization - called the "National Youth League" [国民青年同盟] - with the official aim of "act[ing] as the advance guard of mass mobilization."<sup>80</sup> Emulating the para-military structure and comportment of European fascist youth organizations, the League's members were drawn mainly from among students and distinguished themselves by wearing uniforms.

As he mobilized students, Nakano also sought to "promote the formation of associations consisting of farmers, entrepreneurs in small- and medium-sized enterprises, salaried people, and workers."<sup>81</sup> He hoped that "by mixing and concentrating these various forces and turning them into an all-encompassing national movement" he could "create a force able to change the flow of the time" [時代転換の推進力となす].<sup>82</sup> One outgrowth of Nakano's efforts was the Farm-Village-Relief-Petition Movement [農村救済請願運動], which party-follower Kazami Akira started in an attempt to stretch out feelers to rural communities. Another was Nakano's rapprochement with the labor movement. Rather than creating new organizations from scratch as he had envisioned, Nakano won influential positions in already-existing labor unions. In the fall of 1933, Nakano became president of a Communications Ministry union called the Communications Friends and Comrade Society [通友同志会], which boasted roughly 1,200 members.<sup>83</sup> The fact that Nakano had served as Vice-Minister of Communications under

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<sup>79</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 665.

<sup>80</sup> See *Sanyō Shimpō* [参陽新報], April 5, 1933

<sup>81</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "Policy Paper on the Formation of a National Labor Union League" [国民労働組合同盟結成方針書] in *Sanyō Shimpō* [参陽新報], August 8, 1932.

<sup>82</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction", p. 116.

Hamaguchi helped him win the presidential slot, as he was a known quantity to the union's members. Around that time, Nakano also accepted a directorial position at the Yawata Labor League [八幡勤労同盟], which was comprised of Yawata Steel Works employees in Kyūshū.<sup>84</sup>

Nakano's overtures to the labor unions attracted the media's attention. The *Hōchi News* wondered how much Nakano could actually achieve for Japan's workers,<sup>85</sup> while the *Osaka Mainichi* – nearing Nakano's real intention – asked: “Nakano Seigō rides the labor movement. Will he unify the unions as the Nazis have done?”<sup>86</sup> We shall see below that the answer to both questions was negative.

Nakano also returned to journalism to broaden his reach. Having written relatively little during the 1920s, he became a productive writer again in the early-1930s. More importantly, he re-established control over the operations of Miyake's Gakan magazine, which he had neglected during his Minseitō years. In the summer of 1934, he made Shintō Kazuma, a former boarder at his student dorm and the son of Genyōsha founder Shintō Kiheita, both publisher and editor-in-chief of the magazine. The new Gakan was launched in September 1934 and included, for the first time in a long time, an editorial by Nakano on contemporary affairs. By 1935, Nakano was

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<sup>83</sup> At the time there were 170,000 employees in the Japanese Communications Ministry, of which only half, mainly the postal workers in the urban centers were organized in unions. The first of these unions had been founded in 1925 and been presided over first by Suzuki Bunji and then Akamatsu Katsumaro. When the latter turned to the right in 1932, the union split into three parts, of the which the Communications Friends and Comrade Society [逓友同志会], was the most left-leaning and most combative one.

<sup>84</sup> Besides the Teiyū-Dōshikai and the Yawata Labor League, other labor unions with whom the Nakano faction had relations or tried to have relations were the Fukuoka Kinrō Kokumin Dōmei [福岡勤労国民同盟] and the Yokosuka Kaigun Kōshō [横須賀海軍工廠]. However, it is not clear if Nakano actually succeeded having them affiliate themselves with the Kokumin Dōmei. See *Sanyō Shimpō* [参陽新報] February 11, 1933. For a more detailed treatment of the relationship between the Kokumin Dōmei and the Labor Unions please see Itō Takashi [伊藤隆], “Nakano Seigo and the Tōhōkai” [中野正剛と東方会], in *The Politics of the Showa period* [昭和期の政治], (Tokyo, 1983).

<sup>85</sup> *Hōchi News* [報知], October 10, 1933.

<sup>86</sup> *Osaka Mainichi News* [大阪毎日新聞], October 10, 1933.

back to publishing at least one, and often two, articles a month. In the process, Gakan gradually became the mouthpiece of Nakano's popular movement.

Around this time, Nakano also revived the Tōhōkai [東方会], or Far Eastern Society, which had served as a think tank affiliated with the Tōhōjiron magazine in the 1910s and -20s. He re-launched the Tohokai in October 1933 as a cultural society that aimed to serve as forum for study, research and discussion.<sup>87</sup> In addition to re-enrolling many of its former members, the society attracted some new faces, most notably Colonel Ishiwara Kanji, Honda Kumatarō and Kojima Sei'ichi,<sup>88</sup> who advised Nakano on military, diplomatic and economic matters, respectively.<sup>89</sup>

Since the Yamaji faction's members showed, from the beginning, very little interest in creating a mass party, mass mobilization activities were left to Nakano and his followers. With time, Nakano placed these activities outside the party and under the Tōhōkai's umbrella. While this move accentuated already-existing divisions and made Nakano's faction something of a party unto itself within the National League, it had the advantage of securing Nakano's hold over key projects. Having personal control over the party's mass mobilization activities paid off handsomely for Nakano when the National League dissolved at the end of 1935, as it made transforming the Tōhōkai think tank into a political association and Gakan into its organ relatively easy.

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<sup>87</sup> The Tōhōkai program written by Nakano can be found in the inside cover of Nakano Seigō, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō, October 1933).

<sup>88</sup> Kojima Sei'ichi [小島精一], (1895 - ?), scholar and author of numerous books on economics.

<sup>89</sup> In addition to the above, the Tōhōkai also included Nakano's friend, the philosopher and professor at Waseda, Sugimori Kōjirō [杉森幸次郎], the military experts Yamasaki Yasuzumi [山崎靖純] and Saitō Naomiki [斎藤直幹], the farm movement activist Inamura Ryūichi [稲村隆一], and two members of the military namely Kagesa Sada'aki [影佐禎承] and Hanaya Tadashi [花谷正]. In the following months, many members of the Nakano faction (MPs as well as former MPs) joined the think tank, so that eventually it also included people like Kazami Akira, Kimura Takeo, and Sugiura Takeo.

### Formulating the Fascist Manifesto

Creating new mass organizations and tapping into pre-existing groups comprised only about half of Nakano's efforts to create a popular party. He also sought to replace the hitherto piecemeal and often contradictory ideological pronouncements with a more systematic, cohesive and appealing description. Most important in this respect is his "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction,"<sup>90</sup> a book published in October of 1933 and considered by some to be Nakano's "fascist manifesto."<sup>91</sup> Nakano wrote the book at the Tōhōkai's offices in the summer of 1933, drawing on the expertise of the society's members - in particular, Ishiwara Kanji, Honda Kumatarō, Kojima Sei'ichi, and Sugiura Kōjirō. As the similarity of titles indicates, however, Nakano drew his inspiration from Kita Ikki's notorious and influential "Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan."<sup>92</sup>

In terms of style, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" was strikingly different from the elaborate refinement and attention to detail that had characterized his past works. Divided into nine chapters, each of which starts with several short bullet-point statements followed by two or three brief explanatory paragraphs, the text is bare of Nakano's typical flowerly ornament. We find no allusions to Chinese history to illustrate a point, no proverbs, no displays of learnedness. "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" was intended as a program for action and its straightforward structure – the text reads almost like a to-do list – emphasizes Nakano's sense of urgency.

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<sup>90</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō, October 1933).

<sup>91</sup> For example Inomata on p. 355.

<sup>92</sup> For a comparison between Nakano's work and Kita Ikki's "Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan" [国家改造原理大綱] of 1919 see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 747-61.

Nakano began by explaining the origins of this sense of urgency, titling the first chapter “Declaring the Crisis” [非常時宣言].<sup>93</sup> The text declared that Japan found itself in the midst of a “great global crisis,” which initially had been economic (“the dead end of capitalism”<sup>94</sup>) but soon became social and geopolitical. As beggar-thy-neighbor policies crippled world trade and triggered economic wars between the emerging economic blocs, Nakano feared escalation into an armed conflict; he envisioned a potential second world war, perhaps as soon as 1936. Japan, lacking a viable economic bloc of its own and having earned England’s hostility because of its export competitiveness,<sup>95</sup> was in a particularly vulnerable position: “Japan sorely needs a national policy to deal with the above-mentioned crisis.” With his “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction,” Nakano offered “a suitable, active and aggressive practical program” and promised to “pour all our energy into its realization.”<sup>96</sup>

In the remainder of the work, Nakano detailed the policies and reforms necessary to overcome the crisis. His most fundamental proposals were political, aimed at creating a government that would be strong enough to carry out the economic and foreign policies required to resolve the crisis.<sup>97</sup> He believed the political parties in their current form were not only incapable of achieving such a task,<sup>98</sup> but were actually an “obstacle” to its realization.<sup>99</sup> It was

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<sup>93</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction”, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>95</sup> See Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>96</sup> All three quotes from Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>97</sup> Throughout this book, Nakano returns over and over again to the term “Kyōryoku Seiji” [強力政治] which depending on the context I have rendered as either “strong politics” or “strong government.” On occasion he uses related terms such as “Kyōryoku Naikaku” [強力内閣] meaning “strong cabinet,” or “Kyōryoku Seisaku” [強力政策] meaning “strong policies.”

<sup>98</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction”, p. 208.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

therefore necessary “to abandon traditional party politics entirely and ... form a powerful cabinet.”<sup>100</sup> This “people’s cabinet” - or “strong cabinet,”<sup>101</sup> as Nakano also called it - would be “unrestricted by the majority of the Diet” and “invested for a limited period of time by the Diet with the power necessary to carry out emergency policies.”<sup>102</sup>

Nakano stressed that he did “not deny the principle of democracy” and that “the Diet will continue to be convened as in the past, [will] hold sessions, and [will], of course, monitor the government’s actions. The powers given to the government will be limited in time, because we expect that the crisis will eventually be solved and that the Diet, through structural reforms, will one day recover the people’s trust.”<sup>103</sup> In support of this aim, Nakano noted that temporary transfers of power to the government’s executive branch had many historical precedents, including England during WW1.<sup>104</sup> He noted that Italy and Germany, meanwhile, were undertaking such transfers as he wrote and that “even [in] the democratic USA... the president is following this path and pushing ahead with economic control policies.”<sup>105</sup> Nakano’s motto throughout the book was: “Democracy is the end and autocracy the means.”<sup>106</sup>

Nakano envisioned that, after such political reforms were implemented, the way would be cleared for the introduction of a controlled economy. His overarching aim was “national power” or, more specifically, “the organizational development of the national productive power, with the

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 16-17.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 16-17. Nakano’s idea was perhaps modeled on Germany’s “*Ermächtigungsgesetz*” of January 1933, through which Hitler had been legally given – temporarily at first - dictatorial powers by the German Reichstag to deal with that country’s problems. Initially limited to five years, Hitler was able to expand the duration and the purview of his power and establish tyranny which lasted for 12 years.

<sup>106</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction”, p. 16.



aim of increasing the people's well-being."<sup>107</sup> Nakano did not advocate "nationalization of each and every business," but aimed rather to "allow for private interest in each and every enterprise, with the state only providing guidance concerning the national economy's direction."<sup>108</sup> More specifically, he advocated establishing controls over a wide swath of business areas, including the financial sector, with the aim of channeling private monies into public works. He sought to impose controls on industry and commerce, especially areas such as "investment decisions, production levels, sales, purchases of raw materials, the raising of capital, the definition of accounting standards, and labor conditions;"<sup>109</sup> on agriculture,<sup>110</sup> through price controls on important agricultural goods and the establishment of a system of self-ruled cooperatives; on the labor unions, which would retain the right to bargain collectively while the state "strictly prohibited private struggles that cause the breakdown or standstill of production" and thus mediated between labor and management for the benefit of society; and on various other aspects of the economy such as the flow of trade, foreign exchange markets and public utilities, whose prices would be determined by the public.

In the main body's final chapter, Nakano proposed policies that would establish a controlled economy between Japan and Manchuria,<sup>111</sup> including abolishing trade barriers between the two countries, establishing a common currency, transferring Japanese capital and labor to Manchuria, and establishing a Manchurian Development Board.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 21. On pages 102-3 of the same work, Nakano defined "national power" as follows: "The general national strength includes first, the nation's military power, its economic productive capacity, and the factors which form the basis of this military and economic powers, that is the physical strength of the workers, farmers, and general people, their skills, and spiritual strength. The totality of these factors is what I call general national strength."

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 53-63.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 80-93.

For all the effort he poured into his manifesto, Nakano knew that formulating and publishing a coherent ideology was not enough. Starting in the second half of 1933, Nakano made a sustained effort to spread his beliefs in person, by touring through Japan and popularizing his views through speeches and lectures. The first series, held in the summer and called “In Favor of a Far-Eastern Monroe Doctrine”<sup>112</sup> was followed in early November by a speech titled “Indicators of National Reconstruction,”<sup>113</sup> which summarized his plan.

### **Normalizing the Extraordinary**

Nakano’s initial intellectual shift rightward was triggered specifically by a series of crises that included the Great Depression, the Manchurian Incident and the May 15 incident, and, more generally, by the feeling of emergency that gripped Japan in the early 1930s. It was this feeling of “crisis” [危機] - or, as Nakano most often put it, the sense that Japan was going through an “extraordinary time” [非常時] - that led Nakano to call for extraordinary policies, extraordinary reforms and, eventually, for an extraordinary political leader.

When Nakano realized that a crisis - and the fears it triggered - could lend great power to whomever proposed a solution, he worked the mechanism of spotting an emergency and suggesting a resolution into his repertoire. With time, this alarmist element became so fundamental to Nakano’s thinking that he was unable or unwilling to surrender it, even after Japan re-entered a period of relative calm after 1933. The gap between Nakano’s alarmist rhetoric and Japan’s actual situation was perhaps largest during the Saitō and Okada cabinets. Increased armament spending, combined with a program of public construction projects launched

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<sup>112</sup> Nakano Seigō, “In Favor of the Asian Monroe Doctrine” [アジア・モンロー主義の提唱] speech held in June & July 1933 and reproduced in Nakano Seigō “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction” [国家改造計画綱領], Tokyo, 1933, p. 119-174.

<sup>113</sup> Nakano Seigō in a speech titled “Indicators of National Reconstruction” [国家改造の指標] held at Hibiya Public Hall on November 2, 1933 and quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 762.

by Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo (who served in both cabinets), had improved Japan's economic conditions enormously. Keenly aware that the receding crisis took the bite out of his reform agenda, however, Nakano argued vehemently that the emergency was far from over.

When speaking in the Diet in early 1934, Nakano lamented that the economic expansion was only superficial and that “the fundamental currents are diametrically opposed to it.”<sup>114</sup> According to Nakano, the Saitō program had caused “an economic boom for the upper classes that does not reach the lower classes”, as rising inflation had eroded farmers' and workers' purchasing power. While he welcomed increased armament spending and the development of Japan's heavy industry, Nakano feared that these trends would come to an end once the demand for arms was satisfied.<sup>115</sup> When Okada replaced premier Saitō in 1934 and continued many of his predecessor's policies, Nakano continued criticizing what he viewed as complacency:

“The mission of the Okada cabinet is ... to suppress the hard liners of the navy and the army, to dissolve the feeling of emergency and to lead Japan into a false sense of security and peace...The fact that this is an extraordinary time does not lead to make extraordinary efforts. The fact that this is an extraordinary time leads them to use opium in hope of tranquilizing the people.”<sup>116</sup>

In his speeches and writings, especially “The Empire's Crisis is Far From Resolved,”<sup>117</sup> Nakano maintained that the real crisis would come in 1936. Influenced by the writings of Tōhōkai member Kojima Sei'ichi, Nakano said in a 1933 speech that 1936 would be a crucial year, one in which new armament treaties and many territorial questions (including Manchuria,

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<sup>114</sup> Nakano Seigō in a speech held in the 65<sup>th</sup> Diet on January 25, 1934 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 787.

<sup>115</sup> Nakano wrote that “Armament good are non-consumables” failing to understand that once they break out wars create a sheer unlimited demand for arms. Ibid. p. 793.

<sup>116</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Gakan*, October 1934, p. 12-13.

<sup>117</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The Empire's Crisis is far from Resolved” [帝国の非常時断じて解消せず], (Tokyo, March, 1934).

the Pacific Islands entrusted to Japan by the League of Nations after WW1, etc.) would be negotiated between the Powers.<sup>118</sup> In order to prepare for the Powers' redistribution of the world's colonies and markets, Japan had to reform internally. "If that is not a crisis," Nakano asked to applause, "what is it?"<sup>119</sup> Ironically, in declaring the crisis to be permanent, Nakano made the "extraordinary time" quite ordinary and normal.

Nakano's predictions about the importance of the year 1936 were vindicated – almost spookily – when, on February 26, 1936, young officers of the Imperial Way Faction [皇道派] started a mutiny that saw the Tokyo Police Headquarters, the Diet and the Army Ministry buildings succumb to occupation and several high-ranking government figures lose their lives at the hands of rebel forces. Returning home unexpectedly early that day, Nakano took his sons on a city tour and was disappointed when all they could see of the chaos was a machine gun embankment guarded by rebel soldiers and a young rebel officer giving a speech in the street. Yet when the mutiny's initial shock faded in the aftermath of the rebels' suppression and Nakano sensed the Japanese public becoming complacent, he was quick to talk up the crisis again. He compared the Hirota cabinet, which succeeded Okada after the February 26 uprising, with a "calm wind before a storm."<sup>120</sup> The need to whip up an artificial crisis atmosphere ended with the outbreak of hostilities between China and Japan in the summer of 1937 and the eventual expansion of that conflict into the Pacific War. Thereafter, the storm about which Nakano had long warned became real.

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<sup>118</sup> The idea of 1936 as a crisis climax of crisis had been popularized among others by Kojima Sei'ichi [小島精一] in his "The Global Crisis of 1936" [世界危機一九三六年], (Tokyo: Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1933). For Nakano's treatment of the same idea see for example Nakano Seigō, "Indicator of National Reconstruction", p. 29

<sup>119</sup> Nakano Seigō, Speech held in the 65<sup>th</sup> Diet on January 25, 1934 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 791.

<sup>120</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Gakan*, April 1936, p. 6.

### **The Failure of the Kokumin Dōmei: The Labor Union Example**

By the end of 1933, Nakano had laid claim to two instruments through which he hoped to influence the course of politics: first, a budding mass movement with a published ideology, a think tank, a youth organization, and a hold over two labor unions; second, his traditional power base, which consisted of a Fukuoka constituency, membership in a minor party and a seat in the national parliament. How did Nakano use these tools in the game of politics?

Let us first look at Nakano's attempt to mobilize the populace by bringing mass organizations under the Kokumin Dōmei's umbrella. When he launched the National League, Nakano had hoped it would quickly attract other reform-minded individuals and groups. This did not happen to the extent he had desired. Many groups in the reformist camp chose to remain independent or to affiliate themselves with other political parties. For example, the new bureaucrats sought parliamentary representation through reform factions in the established parties, while army reformer Colonel Nagata Tetsuzan approached the Social Mass Party rather than Nakano's National League. Those few organizations that did come under the Kokumin Dōmei's umbrella, moreover, did not remain for long. The National Youth League dissolved quickly, while Nakano's term as president of the Communications Union lasted just ten months. The Farm-Village-Relief-Petition Movement lasted longer, but Nakano had never had a direct affiliation with that project, which had always belonged to Kazami Akira.

Fundamentally, however, the failure of Nakano's mass movement rested on internal contradictions in Nakano's ideological position. His dealings with the Communication Ministry's labor union provide one illustration of the point. Following the European fascist parties' example, Nakano cast the Kokumin Dōmei's social nationalism as a third way that transcended socialism and liberal capitalism. This formulation worked well on paper and sounded good in speeches, but, in reality, the position's ideological contradictions could not be ignored.

In launching his mass movement, Nakano's professed aim had been integrating Japan's farmers and workers, whom he called "abandoned people" or "people without voice" [無告の民],

into national politics.<sup>121</sup> Giving voice to these people was part of his political mission, and after 1931 his speeches make ample use of the labor movement's vocabulary. When attacking the Important Industry Law in a Diet speech in early 1934, Nakano stated that it did not further "the welfare of the masses" because "today's Industrial Control Law seems to have been created on behalf of one part of monopoly capital, and not on behalf of the masses."<sup>122</sup> In the same speech, he attacked classical liberal economics on the grounds that:

"Letting freedom loose within a society as advanced in its organization as today's means allowing the strong to eat the weak [弱肉強食] and surrendering the economy to anarchism. The organized social classes will then suppress the unorganized social classes. The strong classes will suppress the weak classes. The strong will eat the weak."<sup>123</sup>

He then commented on capitalists' cynical motives:

"Seen through the eyes of a capitalist who thinks only about short-term profit, it is better to keep the rural villages in poverty, for if you do so the villages become a limitless source of slave- and low-wage labor. If the farmers are in distress, they will volunteer to work for free. If you keep them poor, cheap labor becomes available."<sup>124</sup>

Nakano's tactic of criticizing capitalism and using labor-movement terminology was clearly designed to appeal to workers, but was it enough to make him a credible union leader? Doubts are justified at least on two grounds. First, Nakano's critique of classical liberal economics does not mean he had abandoned the totality of liberal economic thought. He believed that capitalism required reform and taming through controls, but that its main aspects, such as

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<sup>121</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Indicator of National Reconstruction", p. 26.

<sup>122</sup> Nakano Seigō, Speech held in the 65<sup>th</sup> Diet on January 25, 1934 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 801-02.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 804.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 805-06.

private property rights and the profit principle, should be retained. When explaining the content of his economic policies, Nakano always took care to distance himself from socialist thinkers, so as not to alienate potential business supporters. The controlled economy he proposed was “neither national management of each and every economic enterprise nor their nationalization and socialization.” More than once, he stressed that the National League still aimed to foster “the individual’s and the group’s lively originality and free capacity for action, and [to make] both contribute to the welfare of the masses.”<sup>125</sup> In short, though Nakano spoke at times like an anti-capitalist, he never was one at heart - and even if he had been, this stance alone would not have made him pro-labor.

Second, even when Nakano did take a pro-labor position, he saw limits to labor’s demands. In his “Outline Plan for National Reconstruction” he wrote:

“Our workers and farmers should now abandon the one-sided principle of class struggle and return to a national perspective. They have to become aware of their true and original mission, and fulfill the positive role of functioning as the axis for the increase of the nation’s general power [総合的国力増進]. The state [国家] should respect this active mission of the workers and farmers, and should support them in fulfilling their function.”<sup>126</sup>

According to Nakano, the interests of workers, management and capitalists had to be subordinated to the overarching aim of increasing national strength. Nakano, in short, was pro-labor only as long as labor was pro-state.

This conception put severe limits on what Nakano was prepared to do for labor. He was quite frank in communicating his ideological position to the union over which he presided. On

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<sup>125</sup> For both quotes see *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], December 18, 1932. Nakano repeated the argument that economic controls would kill competition and creativity in Nakano Seigō, “The Dangers and Rationality behind Positive Expansionism” [積極拡大主義の危機性と合理性], (Tokyo: Tōtairiku-sha [東大陸社], 1937), p. 25-27.

<sup>126</sup> Nakano Seigō, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 757.

the occasion of his inauguration, he gave a speech confirming a worker's right to "pursue one's interest based on one's class position," but also added:

"When it becomes an obstacle to the advancement of the nation's combined strength, capitalism should be overthrown. To the extent that communism is harmful to this combined national strength, it should also be eradicated."<sup>127</sup>

He thus made clear that there was a limit to workers' demands and that this limit was dictated by Japan's quest for "national strength," to which he believed all other aims should be subordinated.

Nakano's forthright description of his beliefs should have been a warning to union members not to expect too much from him. When four members of the union's executive committee were discharged by the Communications Ministry, Nakano appealed to the minister but was unable to have the workers reinstated. Much to the union's disappointment, Nakano did not force the issue by calling a strike:

"A dumb dog will not bite the person that hits him, but instead clench its teeth into the stick with which it is beaten. The officials of the Ministry of Communications are committing an outrage in carrying out the labor laws of the Saitō cabinet, but the source of this oppression is the cabinet, not the ministry officials themselves. They are but the stick of the person beating the dog. The Communications Friends and Comrades Society should oppose the illegal pressure of the Communications Ministry. I myself will have to fight politically against the labor policies of the present cabinet."<sup>128</sup>

If we are to believe the critical assessment of a newspaper, Nakano's passive attitude was typical of his general attitude toward the union:

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<sup>127</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō, speech held on October 8, 1933 when accepting the position of director of the Communications Friends and Comrade Society, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 745 and again in Inomata p. 352-53.

<sup>128</sup> Nakano Seigō, Nakano Seigō, "Indicators of National Reconstruction", p. 46.



“Mr. Nakano, in spite of being the union’s president, never mingled directly with the general union members, so that in the end a feeling has spread throughout the membership that relying on him is unwise. From the very beginning, Mr. Nakano never had the intention to look after each and every task on his own. His original idea was to enter the union only under the condition that he would determine its general direction. Nakano has always been a politician with a very busy life and accepted the position only after having been asked. He is not the sort of man who can afford to spend his time caring about the affairs of a small and inactive union.”<sup>129</sup>

Nakano’s unwillingness to deal with the union’s boring, day-to-day work and his failure to produce results on this and other occasions were the main reasons he rapidly lost popularity among union members. He resigned from his position as president only ten months after accepting it.<sup>130</sup> Nakano’s ambivalent ideological position was mirrored by that of the Communications Union, which had made Nakano its president in hopes of finding shelter from the government’s anti-socialist suppression. While one newspaper described the appointment as a “fresh conversion from National Socialism toward Fascism” [国家社会主義からファッシズムへの鮮やかな転向],<sup>131</sup> it was in reality an effort to hide behind Nakano without truly subscribing to the Kokumin Domei’s ideology. All the union sought was a patron; when they did not get the protection for which they had hoped, they were quick to bail.

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<sup>129</sup> “A Strange Accident in the Communications Sector” [通信労働界の異変], published in “Communication Economics” [交通経済] September, 1934.

<sup>130</sup> Another instance where Nakano failed to deliver results was recorded by Kazami Akira. When the head of a post office ordered some of the postal workers under his supervision not to join Nakano’s union, Nakano approached Kazami who was on good terms with the then Minister of Communications to have head of the post office fired. Kazami refused. See Kazami Akira [風見章], “The Diary of Kazami Akira” [風見彰日記], (Tokyo, Misuzu Shobō, 2008), p. 78-79.

<sup>131</sup> The *Yorozu-chō-hō News* (also known as the *Man-chō-hō*) [万朝報], October 9, 1933.

### **The Failure of the Kokumin Dōmei as a Political Party**

Not all of Nakano's hopes were tied to the Kokumin Dōmei's success as a popular mass movement. He also hoped to gain influence the traditional way - that is, through the Kokumin Dōmei's presence in the Diet. Those hopes were also dashed.

From the time of the Kokumin Dōmei's foundation in 1932, the party, and Nakano's position within it, was under continuous attack by various forces. The "national unity cabinet" [挙国一致内閣] under Saitō, for instance, set out to implement many of the policies that the National League (i.e. Nakano) advocated, thereby hollowing out the Kokumin Dōmei's platform. Under Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo, the government began a program of public works aimed at providing paid jobs for the unemployed, as well as for impoverished peasants during the off season. In line with a foreign policy targeting "autonomous strength"<sup>132</sup> and under pressure from the army, the Saitō cabinet also increased armament spending. Okada Keisuke, who replaced Saitō in July 1934, also pursued an activist economic policy involving increased government spending on infrastructure and armaments. The combined effect of these policies was to improve Japan's economic conditions immensely, and thereby to take the urgency out of Nakano's alarmist reform agenda.

Nakano faced similar competition from the established parties, which not only supported the Saitō and Okada cabinets but also adopted or imitated parts of the National League's platform. In the summer of 1933, the Seiyūkai announced its new economic policy under the title "Rectification of Capitalism,"<sup>133</sup> causing some in the National League to wonder aloud if the established parties were "following our party's ideas."<sup>134</sup> Although it took the Minseitō two more

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<sup>132</sup> Saitō broke with the "cooperative diplomacy of previous party cabinets, and instead followed a new strategy of autonomous strength." See Crowley, "Japan's Quest", p. 195-9, and 231.

<sup>133</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], June 15, and August 30, 1933.

<sup>134</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞], August 30, 1933.

years to follow suit, in the summer of 1935 they decided to “discard the former passive [i.e. laissez-faire] policy” and discuss a new active national policy.<sup>135</sup> As the established parties adopted important aspects of the National League’s platform and supported the Saitō and Okada cabinets in carrying out policies similar to those advocated by the Kokumin Dōmei, the latter’s raison d’être dissolved.

The debate over how to reverse or stop this process brought the old division between the Nakano and Yamaji factions back into the open. Party president Adachi, who in the past had often acted as an arbiter between the two sides, became increasingly unable to bridge the gap. Nakano, despite Japan’s improving economic situation, maintained his alarmist insistence that the country was in crisis and advocated that the party stick to its radical course. The pragmatic Yamaji faction, by contrast, continued to support traditional routes to power, such as gaining positions within the government in exchange for support in the Diet, either directly or in a coalition with an established party. This option became viable when Prime Minister Okada, hoping to strengthen the cabinet’s support in the Diet, asked all parties to cooperate, and offered ministerial posts in exchange for such collaboration. The Minseitō accepted but the Seiyūkai refused, creating an opening for the Kokumin Dōmei. Yamaji, who had long been unhappy in a minor party and sensed an opportunity, campaigned to have Adachi appointed Minister of Development or, alternatively, to have the National League return to the Minseitō. While the scheme failed, giving the Nakano faction the last word on this occasion, the Yamaji faction prevailed in future.<sup>136</sup>

The question of whether to cooperate with the Okada cabinet arose again when Okada submitted an enormous budget proposal to the Diet in early 1935. The Yamaji faction favored

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<sup>135</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞] June 3, 1935.

<sup>136</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol.2, p. 28.

supporting Okada and passing the budget, but Nakano believed that increasing armament spending would drive up inflation and harm overall living standards. Nakano challenged the Diet:

“Today, those who have benefited from the crisis dance for joy, but what has happened to the victims of the crisis? (A supporter shouted: ‘They cry.’). The wage- and salary-earning classes? ... And what about the farmers? Why don’t you take a look? ... They have fallen into a life of slavery.”<sup>137</sup>

When neither faction yielded, Adachi approved the budget single-handedly, but a total of seven party members (mostly affiliated with Nakano) abstained.<sup>138</sup>

A similar pattern repeated itself later that spring, when Okada offered Adachi a seat on the cabinet deliberative council [内閣審議会]. Predictably, the National League’s two factions clashed, with Yamaji favoring acceptance and Nakano opposing it. In the end, it was again Adachi who forced the decision by accepting the position, much to Nakano’s regret. Lamenting the fact that all the members of the council were firmly established figures in mainstream politics, Nakano wrote:

“The cabinet’s deliberative council has not been formed based on the demands of the people, but on the demands of the *genrō* and senior ministers’ cliques. It is not fresh water welling up from below, but stale water being poured down from above.”<sup>139</sup>

Calling the council a “gathering of softliners,” Nakano predicted it would “remain a passive entity and never take any active initiative.”<sup>140</sup> By joining the deliberative council, Adachi

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<sup>137</sup> Nakano Seigō speaking during the 66<sup>th</sup> Diet quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 38.

<sup>138</sup> Those absenting from the vote were Nakano, Kazami, Yutani, Washizawa Yoshiji [鷺沢与四二], Toda Yumi [戸田由美], Suzuki Shōgo [鈴木正吾], and Takahashi Jutarō [高橋寿太郎]. See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞] February 14 and 15, 1935.

<sup>139</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: A Gathering of Softliners” [時論：軟派政客の集合], *Gakan*, June 1935, p. 4.

had turned the Kokumin Dōmei into a de facto government party, which emboldened the Yamaji faction to go a step further and begin discussing the possibility of re-joining the Minseitō ranks.<sup>141</sup> Aware that ideological competition from the established parties was eroding the party's appeal, the National League's leaders – doubtless with one eye on the upcoming provincial and general elections - planned to revise the party platform at the 1935 convention.<sup>142</sup> The attempt to shore up the party's steady decline, however, came much too late.

When the Kokumin Dōmei suffered a crushing defeat in the late 1935 provincial elections, unease about the general election scheduled for February 1936 started spreading among the party's members.<sup>143</sup> Disappointed with the failure of the Kokumin Dōmei as both a mass movement and a political party, on December 9, Nakano left the League on December 9. He was followed by the members of his faction, with the notable exception of Kazami Akira. The Kokumin Dōmei continued to exist as a minor splinter party until 1940, when it dissolved itself to join Konoe's IRAA.

### **After the Kokumin Dōmei**

Nakano's activities after leaving the Kokumin Dōmei followed a familiar pattern. As in 1932 when, following his withdrawal from the Minseitō, Nakano traveled to the East Asian mainland, in late 1935 he again visited Manchuria and China. Nakano's consistent reaction to

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p. 4. In a separate section of the same editorial titled “What We Expect from Adachi” [安達さんに望む], Nakano also expressed his hope that Adachi would use the influence on the council in order to carry out reforms.

<sup>141</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞] May 30, 1935.

<sup>142</sup> See *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞] April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1935.

<sup>143</sup> Prior to the election the National League had held 65 seats in provincial parliaments. The party had filed a total of 64 candidates of which, however, only 31 were elected. The main factors contributing to the defeat were the fact that with the easing of the economic crisis the National League's ideology and program had lost its appeal but also lack of campaign funds.

political setbacks – essentially, to flee the scene - was motivated by the desire both to distance himself geographically from his mess and to regain the strength and orientation necessary to make a new start. Nakano followed this same pattern in early 1939, after failing to merge the Tōhōkai with the Social Mass Party.<sup>144</sup>

After returning to Japan in mid-January 1936, Nakano threw himself into the campaign for the upcoming general election, scheduled for February. Since he and the members of his faction that had followed him out of the Kokumin Dōmei had had no time to regroup, each ran as an independent candidate. As much as he could, Nakano supported his followers by giving speeches to their constituencies in various parts of Japan, with encouraging results: Nine of his faction's members were re-elected. Nakano, who by now had accumulated a wealth of campaign experience, also managed to get re-elected with the highest numbers of votes in his district.

The army revolt of February 26, 1936 gave Nakano and his followers direction as they considered whether, and in what form, they would pursue their aims. The uprising vindicated, among other things, Nakano's warnings that Japan was in state of crisis. While economic boom induced by the policies of the two preceding cabinets had temporarily created complacency among Japan's population and governing elite, the army's revolt had revived the sense of crisis. Nakano hoped to exploit what he saw as a sorely needed wake-up call for his purposes.

More importantly, Nakano saw the suppression of the uprising (which he called a revolution), as the end – at least for the time being – of efforts to bring about reforms by violent

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<sup>144</sup> Leaving for China at the end of the year in the company of ten people, including Tōhōkai members Kojima Sei'ichi, Sugimori Kōjirō and Nakayama Yū [中山優], Nakano traveled through Korea to Manchuria, where they visited the new capital, and then onto China, visiting Shanghai and Nanking, where Nakano met with the leader of Nationalist China, Chiang Kai-shek. Nakano said the two most important findings of this tour were, first, a generally positive impression of developments in Manchuria under army leadership and, second, the contents of his conversation with Chiang Kai-shek, to whom he had proposed a total political, economic and military union of Japan and China. Nakano's recollection of the conversation between him and Chiang can be found in a pamphlet entitled "The Chinese Question in the Eleventh Year of Shōwa" [昭和十一年の日支問題] and in a speech held by Nakano on September 10, 1936 (more than half a year after the discussion and therefore should be taken with a grain of salt). Alternatively see Nakano Yasuo. vol. 2, p. 116 - 122.

means. With Kita Ikki imprisoned, Nakano calculated that the time was ripe for the non-violent, legal reform movement he had long envisioned. He was convinced that Japan would follow the examples of Fascist Italy and, especially, of Nazi Germany, where mass-based parties led by charismatic figures had legally grasped power and carried out the kind of reforms Nakano saw as necessary for national survival. Believing the Hirota cabinet to be the Japanese counterpart to the Papen and Brüning cabinets that preceded Hitler's rise to power,<sup>145</sup> Nakano felt confident that Japan, too, would soon see the rise of a fascist leader.

Nakano's analysis led him to take two crucial steps. First, he aligned himself and his followers even more closely with Ishiwara Kanji and the army reformers close to him, to the point that Nakano came to act almost as the army's mouthpiece in parliament. Second, Nakano renewed his attempt to create a mass-based party to serve as the legal non-violent vehicle of Japanese political reform. This new party was modeled more on the European fascist parties than the Kokumin Dōmei had ever been. Before the end of 1937, Nakano had traveled to Europe as the "Envoy of the People" [国民使節] and met with both Mussolini and Hitler. Upon his return, Nakano propagated fascism so passionately that his life-long friend Ogata Taketora concluded "that he had gone crazy."<sup>146</sup> We return to Nakano's and his followers' efforts to create another mass-based party in the next chapter.

### **Japan and the Axis Powers**

Though Nakano's political position in the early 1930s contained enough elements borrowed from European fascism to earn him the label "Japan's Hitler," and though the Kokumin Dōmei's uniforms led some commentators to call it a "Fascist" party, Nakano was not yet wedded exclusively to the fascist model. When he argued for a strong government in 1932-3, he

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<sup>145</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, November 1936, p. 9-10.

<sup>146</sup> Ogata, p. 23.

did not necessarily envision a dictatorship mimicking those in Germany and Italy. A strong presidency - such as those modeled in the US by Roosevelt or in post-WWI France by Clemenceau- was an acceptable alternative.<sup>147</sup> It was only in the years 1936-8 that shifts in the international situation caused Nakano to commit himself fully and exclusively to European fascism, and it was only with Nakano's trip to Europe in the winter of 1937-8 that his move toward fascism was complete. After he returned from Europe in March 1938, Nakano's first public speech in his native Fukuoka ended with: "Long Live the Fascists! Long live Mussolini!"<sup>148</sup>

Two factors pushed Nakano to take this final step toward fascism. First, he was enamored of the spectacular economic and diplomatic successes of Germany under Hitler and, to a lesser extent, of Italy under Mussolini. Of all the powers, Germany seemed to have dealt most successfully with the challenge posed by the Great Depression, especially considering its difficult starting position following its defeat in WW1. Like many of his contemporaries around the world, Nakano was deeply impressed with Germany's rise from the ashes; he was not alone in concluding that Japan could learn something from Germany's experience. Germany's ascent in 1936-41 to heights that had seemed unimaginable only a decade earlier not only led Nakano to feel vindicated in associating himself with the German Nazis, but also encouraged him to deepen that association.

The second factor pushing Nakano toward his ultimate embrace of fascism was the fact that Japan, in its search for national security based on economic autarky, came increasingly into conflict with the non-fascist Powers (England, France, the US, and Soviet Russia). Nakano believed these conflicts were a natural outcome of Japan's position in the international order,

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<sup>147</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "Strong politics versus authoritarian politics" [強力政治か強権政治か], in *Gakan*, May 1936, p.2.

<sup>148</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, May 1938, p. 5.



which resembled Germany's and Italy's positions more than it did those of the other Powers. Not only did Japan, Germany and Italy all reject Communism, making them enemies of Russia, but each also rejected the post-WWI international order because it denied them access to markets and resources. Nakano recognized that "Italy's situation is very similar to that of Japan. Its territory is poor and its population is growing rapidly. Pressure from outside is immense." He also saw that these similarities made the three nations natural enemies of the "League of Nations system, the Versailles System."<sup>149</sup> After his return from Europe in the spring of 1938, Nakano would state with more clarity that:

"Japan, Germany and Italy ... must correct and overcome the unjust Versailles Treaty System that presently governs the world and [instead] establish true justice ... These three countries must reach out to each other to reconstruct today's international order. At present, the world is being bullied by the status-quo faction with England at its center and Russia, France and the vast USA acting as allies... The Versailles Treaty System governing the world at present is evil. ... Correcting this [evil] is Japan's responsibility as well as the responsibility of Germany and Italy, who have stood up in cooperation with Japan."<sup>150</sup>

With every German revision of the Versailles settlement –whether diplomatic before 1939 or military thereafter – Nakano found his interpretation of international relations more convincing. Having first associated the Tōhōkai with the Italian Fascists and German Nazis, Nakano soon came to advocate that Japan join the European Axis, as he believed that consolidating Japan's empire and economic bloc would be more feasible in cooperation with Germany and Italy. In doing so, he bore responsibility for Japan's association with fascism.

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<sup>149</sup> Both quotes from Nakano Seigō "People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany" [国民よ起きて — 独伊より帰りて], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1938, p. 7.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3-4.

### **An Implausible Explanation for Nakano's Attraction to Fascism: Personal Life**

Some biographers have argued that Nakano's move away from liberalism and toward fascism was the result of a series of personal tragedies.<sup>151</sup> The amputation of Nakano's leg and the death of his father in the second half of the 1920s were followed by the death of his first-born son, Katsuaki, during a mountain-climbing accident in the summer of 1931. Two years later, Nakano's wife was diagnosed with tuberculosis, from which she died in June of 1934. On top of all this, his second-born son, Yūshi, after suffering several mental breakdowns and developing symptoms of schizophrenia, died of blood poisoning in July 1935.<sup>152</sup> Did these tragedies change the way Nakano thought about politics?

The death of his father in the summer of 1928 does not seem to have hit Nakano particularly hard. His father's advanced age – 71 – meant near-term death was likely. Nakano's relationship with his father, moreover, had never been close. The loss of his first-born son, Katsuaki, by contrast, left a more profound impression – enough to make Nakano re-evaluate his relationship to the rest of his children. Describing the experience in detail and with unusual emotional intimacy in an article, Nakano, then 46 years old, wrote that his son's death was the “first taste of sorrow in my life.”<sup>153</sup> The death made Nakano believe that, up to then, he had been an “unnaturally strict father,”<sup>154</sup> which he saw as a result of his own upbringing in a Kyūshū samurai family, where he “had been greatly influenced by the feudal way of the warrior...and

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<sup>151</sup> For example, his son Nakano Yasuo writes, that the year 1933 during which Nakano's wife fell ill was a period of “internal changes” [内面的転機] and implied that this also accounted for some of the shifts in Nakano's political views. Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 714.

<sup>152</sup> There was in Nakano's family a history of insanity. The younger brother of Nakano's mother Tora had become insane and died at a young age. Likewise, Nakano's younger brother Yasukai had been hospitalized several times following nervous breakdowns caused by stress. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 21.

<sup>153</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Hold on, Father” [シツカリシロ・チチ] in Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the Soul” [魂を吐く] (Tokyo, 1938), p. 314.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 324

raised to believe that showing love and sadness is most shameful for a man.”<sup>155</sup> Realizing that hiding his emotions masked “his own inability to accept the painful truth on its own terms,”<sup>156</sup> Nakano gathered his remaining sons around him under the mosquito net in his bedroom and for the first time allowed himself to cry in front of them.

Before Katsuaki’s death, Nakano had been seen by his children as somewhat of a “rustic brute” with no appreciation of arts, literature or even moving pictures. Their characterizations included descriptions of a man who could, on occasion, behave like a “violent tyrant” [暴君]<sup>157</sup> and who even had a “sadistic”<sup>158</sup> streak. Katsuaki himself had been so afraid of his father that when the first-born son made a list in his diary of things to fear, it included “earthquakes, lightning, fire, and the old man” [オヤジ].<sup>159</sup> While Nakano’s eldest two sons dealt with their fear through rebellion and criticism, the younger sons withdrew from their father.

Following Katsuaki’s death, Nakano tried to bridge the emotional gap with his younger sons by bringing them to restaurants, attending their sporting events and taking them on trips through Japan. More than anything else, he rode frequently with them on horseback. Nakano’s efforts produced little tangible results - his youngest son later recalled that during the restaurant visits, “besides the food, there was no exchange at the level of the heart” [真の心の交流はなかった].<sup>160</sup>

The death of his wife in 1934, by contrast, seems to have impacted Nakano more broadly. She had been one of the few female presences in Nakano’s life (others included Noguchi Yukiko,

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 320 and p. 323.

<sup>157</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 571.

<sup>158</sup> See Ibid., vol. 2, p. 101.

<sup>159</sup> See Ibid., vol. 1, p. 491.

<sup>160</sup> See Ibid., vol. 2, p. 83.

the nurse whom Nakano met at Kyūshū hospital as a youth, and his beloved mother, Tora). His wife's death not only put an end to what seems to have been an overall happy marriage,<sup>161</sup> but also seems to have marked end of Nakano's sexual life. Even as a bachelor, Nakano does not seem to have entertained many amorous relations or to have frequented prostitutes or brothels. It is untrue that "his life was without romance," as Aochi stated,<sup>162</sup> because Nakano was attracted to women in general and, on occasion, showed his interest with such crude directness that it embarrassed those around him.<sup>163</sup> He seems, instead, to have shied away from extramarital sex, perhaps on account of his leg injury. When Nakano and Kazami Akira, freshly employed journalists for the *Tokyo Daily* sometime around 1909, prowled through the Yoshiwara red-light district, Nakano was approached by a prostitute who tried to pull him into the brothel. He resisted the invitation vehemently, nearly getting into a fight with her. Kazami saw Nakano's resistance as a reflection of his "purity" [純真].<sup>164</sup> Ogata shared this view, calling Nakano's lifestyle "puritan" [ピューリタンの生活] and adding that Nakano "did not like liquor or tobacco, and of course he stayed away from women and song."<sup>165</sup> After his wife's death, Nakano's followers brought him to a Geisha in Shimbashi where he spent some pleasant hours. When those same

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<sup>161</sup> Ogata writes that Nakano's marriage life was a happy one until the death of his son. See Ogata, p. 32. This view is shared by Nakayama Yū [中山優]; "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う]; in "Kyōtsū no hiroba" [共通の広場]; September 1952, p. 46.

<sup>162</sup> Aochi Shin [青地晨], "Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛] in *Chisei* [知性], February 1955, p. 154.

<sup>163</sup> Kazami Akira recalled the following anecdote about Nakano. "When he was 24 or 25 starting to be relatively known as a writer, we left the *Tokyo Daily News* because we felt were not being well treated there and joined the *Tokyo Asahi News*. Since we were both bachelors at the time, we would often roam around the city together. His lack of etiquette [無遠慮さ] or shall I call it his carefree attitude often embarrassed me. For example, if a young woman would sit opposite to us on a train he would ask me in a loud voice. 'What do you think about that chick?' I really had trouble answering that question." Kazami Akira quoted in Mitamura Takeo, Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?" [中野正剛は何故自刀したか], (Tokyo, 1953), p. 125-26.

<sup>164</sup> See Mitamura, "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?", p. 126

<sup>165</sup> Ogata, p. 32.

followers, wishing to do him another favor, brought him there again a couple of weeks later, Nakano got angry and said: “Don’t make fun of people.”<sup>166</sup> Indeed, unlike Nakano’s idol Saigō Takamori, that great patron of brothels, and Nakano’s mentor Tōyama Mitsuru, who is said to have spent two months living in a brothel “practicing Zen on top of the belly of his favorite prostitute,”<sup>167</sup> Nakano cultivated the image of an ascetic. In one of the notes he wrote the evening he killed himself, Nakano stated: “Since 1934, I have lived the life of a bachelor [仏壇守りとして生きてきた].”<sup>168</sup> It is impossible to tell whether Nakano really was the ascetic he claimed to be or whether he was only better at keeping his affairs, whether romantic or purely sexual, secret. Even contemporaries were unsure whether Nakano’s image was calculated to appeal to voters or whether it was an expression of genuine respect for women.<sup>169</sup> Whatever the answer, after his

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<sup>166</sup> Tomatsu Keigi [戸松慶議]; “A Record of Friends and Mentors: General Ishiwara Kanji, Nakano Seigō and I” [師友録: 石原莞爾將軍、中野正剛と私]; in Sōgō Bunka [綜合文化]; September 1956, p. 80-81.

<sup>167</sup> Toyama was a notorious womanizer. While in Tokyo, during his younger days, he once spent two months without interruption in a brothel, called the beach house [浜の家], where he claimed to have practiced his way of Zen. When one of this followers visited him there and asked him what he did all day long, Toyama replied: “I am walking the way of Buddha.” [俺は誠の道を行っている] and then explained: “I am a man without spirit and whatever I do I quickly grow tired of it. Buying Geishas is the only thing I do with all my heart and sincerity and it is the only thing I do not grow tired of. I believe this is my way to enlightenment [俺の誠の道だろう] and I follow it every day.” Toyama summed up the wisdom that he had arrived at during his studies of Zen by reverting the Buddhist saying “All attachment is void” [色即是空] into “All emptiness is sexuality.” [空即是色]. See Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], The way of the lion: Nakano Seigō [獅子の道中野正剛], (Tokyo, 1986) p. 247 and following.

<sup>168</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 811.

<sup>169</sup> Tomatsu Keigi suggested that that respect that Nakano claimed to have for women was a political calculation, i.e. a way to appeal to voters. See Tomatsu Keigi [戸松慶議]; “A Record of Friends and Mentors: General Ishiwara Kanji, Nakano Seigō and I” [師友録: 石原莞爾將軍、中野正剛と私]; in Sōgō Bunka [綜合文化]; September 1956, p. 81. Nakano’s friend Ogata on the other hand, praised Nakano’s “puritan life-style” and added that “there are not many contemporary politicians who cannot compare to him.” Ogata, p. 32.

wife's death, Nakano never re-married and his mother became once again the main, and perhaps sole, female presence in his life.<sup>170</sup>

Nakano's wife's death also left a spiritual void in his home. She had brought cultural refinement, urban cosmopolitanism and arts appreciation into the house, and after her death, the home's atmosphere was dominated by the rustic style of the Kyūshū samurai ethos that Nakano and his mother cultivated. Nakano tried filling this void by taking an interest in matters about which he had previously cared little. He became religious, for instance, building a Buddhist altar in his wife's former room, where he prayed regularly. He also started reading and appreciating poetry.<sup>171</sup>

Another way in which Nakano dealt with the loss of his family members was by channeling much of his free time into horseback riding. It may have been a form of escape or distraction, but it afforded him at least some emotional relief. Even as a child, Nakano had liked, and occasionally ridden, horses. During his trip to Manchuria in 1932, he realized how practical horse-riding could be for someone missing a leg and, once back in Tokyo, he started taking lessons. After his wife's death, this hobby became a veritable passion. Nakano bought at least half-dozen horses in the next ten years,<sup>172</sup> built stables and horse-riding grounds in both Tokyo

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<sup>170</sup> See Ogata Taketora [緒方竹虎]; “Nakano Seigō a Dutiful Son” [孝子の中野正剛君] in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954); p. 48-49. See also Ogata Taketora [緒方竹虎], “His Strong Sides and his Gentle Sides” [強い面・優しい面]; part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in “Japan and the Japanese” [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 16-18.

<sup>171</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 179.

<sup>172</sup> Nakano Yasuo also addresses the interesting question of how Nakano could pay for this expensive hobby, which given that a single horse could cost several thousand Yen and Nakano's income as a member of parliament was only 3,000 Yen per annum, was clearly beyond his means. According to his son, the horses were often presents from political supporters and businessmen. Thus, a backer of Kazami Akira, by the name of Saitō Shigeo [斎藤茂一] helped Nakano to buy a horse, while another was a present by Shindō Shintarō [真藤慎太郎] who like Nakano came from Fukuoka and as a child had studied under Nakano's teacher Shibata Fumishiro. The present included the fodder necessary to maintain the horse. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 78 and p. 201.

and Fukuoka, arranged for his sons to receive instruction so they could accompany him on outings, and perfected his own skill as a rider. Wind or rain, he began each day with a two-hour ride, which afforded him the time and peace to prepare for the typically-turbulent day ahead. In one of his more intimate pieces, Nakano described how after “having lost a son, then my wife and then another son” it was only when riding a horse that he could “transcend the border between dream and reality.” He added that horse-riding was “the only state in life that will afford me joy today.”<sup>173</sup>

But for all the changes that losing a wife and two sons may have caused in Nakano’s life and personality, the deaths did not paralyze him either privately or professionally. He continued to be an active patriarch, buying in 1928 a vacation home on the beach near Yokosuka where the family spent summer weekends,<sup>174</sup> building in 1932 a new house in Yoyogi only months after Katsuaki’s passing, and building in 1934 another weekend refuge west of Tokyo on the Tama river, which he called the “House of Benevolent Rain” [慈雨莊]. As before, Nakano took an avid interest in the education of the students living in his dorm, this time building at his new home a *sumō* wrestling ground, an archery shooting range and a *jūdō* hall where students were instructed once weekly by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police’s *jūdō* instructor. Finally, Nakano’s personal losses did not diminish his passion for politics. He continued traveling, touring the country giving lectures and speeches while writing abundantly and engaging in politics with typical vigor.

Do these personal tragedies, individually or in sum, really provide an explanation for Nakano’s move toward fascism? This biographer leans toward a qualified no. It is true Nakano’s family tragedies triggered changes in his personality, but the changes smacked little of the emotions we associate with fascism. Stated simply, Nakano did not harden through the

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<sup>173</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata, p. 367 – 68, quote taken from Nakano Seigō “Riding Akatsukikaze” [暁風に乗る].

<sup>174</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 589-90.

experience, but became rather soft. Personal loss made Nakano more lenient, forgiving and patient - not only toward his children, but even toward the family's pet dogs. In the past, Nakano had often kept dogs for fighting and had not thought twice about giving them away if they lost a fight. After his family members' deaths, Nakano held on even to the dogs that lost, and as his interest in horses increased he gradually lost all appetite for dog fights.<sup>175</sup> In short, it is difficult to see how a gentler and more lenient attitude toward the people around him, or his new-found religiosity and appreciation for poetry, would have pushed Nakano to join the fascist camp. The only way in which Nakano's personal tragedies may be seen to have influenced his political shift to the right is that they may have colored his mood and intensified the sense of crisis that permeated his thinking in those years.

#### **Continuities and Discontinuities between Nakano's Liberal and Fascist Periods**

We have so far explained Nakano's intellectual move to the right mainly in terms of changes in the world around him. This approach, while popular among most of Nakano's biographers, only gets at part of the truth. We now explore an alternative explanation for Nakano's turn toward fascism, one that stresses the continuities in his thinking and has been explored in greater detail by Muro Kiyoshi.<sup>176</sup> The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but the second requires that we take a step back to examine the entirety of Nakano's life in search of elements visible before the 1930s that suggest his embrace of Fascism and Nazism in 1937 was, in fact, not a break with his past but rather a continuation of major elements of it.

Neither Nakano's critique of the established parties nor his desire to establish a mass-based party, for instance, originated in 1931. Both elements were already present in Nakano's

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<sup>175</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 624-25 and vol. 2, p. 102.

<sup>176</sup> Muro Kiyoshi [室潔]; *Topple Tōjō – An Appraisal of Nakano Seigō* [東条討つべし 中野正剛評伝], (Tokyo, 1999), pp. 17 – 59.



thinking when he entered politics in 1920. The 1930s break in Nakano's attitude toward the military was also not as stark as some biographers suggest. Nakano had never been a pacifist and once even dreamt of a military career. As for economic controls, Muro has suggested that the first seeds of such leanings in Nakano's thinking can be found in the Minseitō program of 1927.<sup>177</sup>

A deeper-lying continuity in Nakano's thinking, one that spans both his liberal and his fascist period, is his view of political leaders. In brief, Nakano's soft spot for charismatic leaders such as Saigō, Napoleon, Clemenceau, and Lenin made him susceptible to the pull of Europe's Fascist and Nazi leaders. As early as 1927, while still praising parliamentary constitutional politics as the preferred mechanism for gathering and prioritizing a society's conflicting interests, Nakano mentioned that a dictatorship could fulfill the same function. Using Mussolini's Fascist regime as an example, Nakano wrote:

“If we study the nature of present-day dictatorships, it is not as if a single hero with an iron fist and no regard for the people steps on them and oppresses them randomly. It is rather the case of someone who illuminates the people's emotions and observes their hopes and feelings very sensitively; someone who ... is not taken by the vices and who executes the people's highest and most daring beliefs. Mussolini from Italy is a man who, when the patriotism of the people was aroused by the diplomatic humiliation after the Great War, and when the reaction of the right wing against the blind actions of the left wing reached a climax, grasped the national psyche and rose in anger. At the back of the dictator's iron fist is modern Italy's general will and emotion...A people with

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<sup>177</sup> As evidence Muro points to a short piece by Nakano in the February 1928 issue of the Minseitō party organ “Minsei” in which he called the basic platform of the party “National Adjustism” [国家整調主義] – a phrase that according to Muro was nothing else but the advocacy of economic controls. Muro maintains that Nakano gave life to these ideas in his proposal for the private management of the telecommunication industry while serving as parliamentary Vice-Minister in the Communications Ministry and concludes that “consequently there is seamless continuity between the two, and I cannot see any break” between Nakano's position in 1927/28 and the position laid out in Nakano Outline Plan for National Reconstruction. Muro Kiyoshi [室潔]; Topple Tōjō – An Appraisal of Nakano Seigō [東条討つべし 中野正剛評伝], (Tokyo, 1999), p. 10; See also Nakano Seigō, “National Adjustism as Emphasized by our Party” [我党の高調する国家整調主義], in Minsei [民政], vol. 2, February 1928, p. 28.

education and a strong spirit will respect a hero and trust a great person, but will not follow him blindly and will not idolize him [偶像視].”<sup>178</sup>

Nakano's favorable opinion of Europe's fascist leaders was confirmed when he met Mussolini and Hitler in the winter of 1937-8. Nakano concluded that both were great individuals equipped with the rarest political acumen and put them into the same category as his life-long idol, Saigō Takamori - probably the highest compliment Nakano could pay any politician.<sup>179</sup> Discussing the impressions he gained in Europe, Nakano said:

“From his outside appearance, Mussolini is like Saigō Takamori. In terms of human nature, however, clarity of mind makes Mussolini more like Katsu Kaishū, while Hitler is more like Saigō. On the one hand, we have Hitler [and] Saigō, who have arrived at their insights from respectful faith...Mussolini, on the other hand, starts from thorough knowledge to enter the realm of the pure human condition. Both share an abundant humanity. On the one hand a man of great wisdom, on the other hand a man of great faith, and yet I believe that ultimately they both converge toward the same point.”<sup>180</sup>

Further continuities become clear if we recall the general ideas that Nakano developed about the nature of political progress while still a journalist in the 1910s. Then, Nakano had seen the over-arching trend of politics as steady progress toward ever-greater popular participation. Within Japan, Nakano's conception of political progress meant emancipating the people from the

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<sup>178</sup> At this stage in his career, Nakano still warned that “dictatorial governments should only come about in times when the nation is in emergency or under threat in order to save the nation, through the appearance of a great hero.” Nakano added that if a dictatorship was to appear under different circumstances, “it should be viewed as a misfortune for the nation” and under normal conditions, a great nation and this of course included Japan should adhere to constitutional politics centered around a parliament, but even at this early stage, he did not rule out dictatorships categorically and clearly sympathized with Mussolini. Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano, Yasuo vol.1, p. 456-57.

<sup>179</sup> In a conversation with Nakayama Yū, Nakano compared Hitler and Mussolini to the first generation of Genyōsha activists: “When I meet with Mussolini and Hitler, it did not feel as if we were meeting for the first time. It was like meeting the *senpais* [先輩] of the Genyōsha in the old days....” Nakano quoted in Nakayama Yū [中山優]; “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う]; in *Kyōtsū no hiroba* [共通の広場]; September 1952, p. 49.

<sup>180</sup> Nakano Seigō “People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany” [国民よ起きて — 独伊より帰りて], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1938, p. 31.

Japanese elites; externally, it meant emancipating the Asian nations from the Western colonial powers. Having sought to achieve these aims through democracy in the 1920s, Nakano found no difficulty accommodating both emancipatory projects within his interpretation of fascism.

Like many of his contemporaries, Nakano saw the European fascist regimes as emancipatory political systems that facilitated popular participation in domestic politics. After his return from Europe in 1938, Nakano stated:

“Both fascism and Nazism are different from the despotic politics of antiquity. They are not a form of conservatism that has regressed backwards from democracy. They have overcome and gone beyond democracy and are even more popular [民主的]. This is not the opinion of scholars, but mine.”<sup>181</sup>

In support of this view, Nakano pointed out repeatedly the humble origins from which Mussolini, Hitler and many of the Nazi leaders had risen. He believed the fact that Nazi Germany opened government positions to young talent was the reason “things move in Germany.”<sup>182</sup> More than once, he contrasted the allegedly pragmatic and dynamic administration of Germany with Japan’s ossified bureaucracy, calling the latter the “disease that would bring about Japan’s death.”<sup>183</sup> In Nakano’s eyes, Italian Fascism and German Nazism were modernizing, progressive movements - radical, perhaps, but nevertheless positive forces that had channeled non-elite popular energy into necessary reforms.

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<sup>181</sup> Nakano Seigō in his speech at the first Tōhōkai party convention, December 9, 1938 reprinted in “On the Occasion of Tōhōkai’s First National Convention” [東方会第一回全国大会の臨みて], *Tōtairiku*, March 1939, p. 9.

<sup>182</sup> Nakano Seigō “People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany” [国民よ起きて — 独伊より帰って], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1938, p. 50.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. p. 50

More continuities can be found in the area of international relations, where Nakano had always advocated the liberation of East Asia from Western colonialism. As early as 1915, Nakano's anti-colonialist belief had led him to argue that Japan should have entered WW1 on Germany's side, not on England's. In the post-WW1 global order that Nakano saw as characterized by a conflict between the haves and the have-nots, Nakano had initially hoped for Japan to move closer to Soviet Russia. As the economic stress caused by the Great Depression deepened this conflict, dividing the world into the "defenders of the status quo" [現状維持派] on the one hand and those trying to overcome the status quo [現状打開派] on the other, Nakano returned to advocating closer ties with Germany and Italy, which he saw as Japan's natural allies. Accordingly, Nakano demanded that Japan should expand the Anti-Comintern Pact (directed primarily against the Soviet Union) to a military alliance directed against all the Powers, especially England and the U.S.

To what extent is Nakano's move toward fascism a reaction to changes in his political environment, and to what extent is it an expression of fundamental ideological continuities in his thinking? Perhaps the briefest answer to this question would be to state that Nakano's embrace of the fascist model was a clear break in terms of political means but less of one in terms of political ends. Both as a liberal as well as a fascist, Nakano pursued the same objectives - namely the emancipation of the people of Japan and Asia - throughout his life. The difference was that before 1930, Nakano hoped to achieve his aims through democracy, while thereafter he pinned his hopes on fascism. Adopting fascism in the early 1930s, moreover, seemed to make good political sense. Nakano believed that Germany and Italy were examples of a general historical pattern, according to which "after the fall of the established [i.e. liberal] parties, social democracy will raise its head. Once the inherently faulty nature [of social democracy] has been exposed,

however, it is the natural course that our activities [i.e. fascism] will come to the forefront.”<sup>184</sup> By launching a fascist movement in Japan, Nakano hoped to exploit a rising political force that could push him to the center of power, just as it had done with Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany.

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Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: The Social Mass Party and its Historical Role” [時論：社大党とその歴史的役割], in *Tōtairiku*, June 1937, p. 6.

## Chapter Five: Imitating Fascism - The Tōhōkai

### Introduction

In the years after 1937, Nakano renewed his attempt to launch a Japanese fascist party that would develop into a mass movement. This second attempt, which yielded a party called the Tōhōkai, was influenced and shaped by three main factors. Developments in Japan and in the world at large played the most important role of the three. Most noteworthy on the international stage was the 1937 outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, which drove Japan into opposition with the United States and England and into the arms of Germany and Italy. That conflict culminated in the Pacific War and Japan's total defeat. The dominant theme on the domestic front, meanwhile, was mobilization for war. The debate over what role the Japanese citizenry would play in this mobilization process climaxed during the second and third Konoe cabinets (July 22, 1940 to July 18, 1941), which saw the launch of the New Order Movement [新体制運動] that in turn, led to the establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) [大政翼賛会] in October of 1940.

Nakano's efforts to launch a fascist party were also shaped by his political views, his evolving understanding of fascist ideology and movements, and the practical mass-mobilization experience he had gained throughout the 1930s. As has been demonstrated, Nakano's overarching political aims - bringing the Japanese people into politics and liberating the Asian people from colonialism - remained unchanged. What had changed was the means he hoped to employ to achieve his goals. A liberal democrat up to 1930, the economic crisis of the early 1930s caused Nakano to make the case for a temporarily stronger executive that would, with the support of a mass-based popular party, implement policies to bring Japan back to health. The failure of the Kokumin Dōmei, Nakano's first attempt to create a proto-fascist movement in Japan, did not cause him to fundamentally question his strategy for mass mobilization and party organization.

The Tōhōkai continued absorbing already-existing organizations such as labor and farmers' unions into its fold, and thus continued dealing with all the challenges to ideological and organizational coherence such a strategy entailed. The main difference was that when Nakano launched the Tōhōkai he went about it much more whole-heartedly than he had with the Kokumin Domei, not bothering the second time around with un-committed actors such as Adachi and the Yamaji faction followers. In launching the Tōhōkai, Nakano took matters into his own hands and, having more control over the input, he achieved an outcome closer to his ideals.

Last but not least, the size, structure, organization, and, ultimately, power of Nakano's party determined, to a large extent, how he could use it to influence Japanese politics. Accordingly, one thread of this chapter's narrative will highlight Nakano's attempts at party organization and expansion, as well as the way he wielded both the party's power and his own influence over the masses. As will be argued, Nakano's ultimate failure to influence Japanese politics through the Tōhōkai was very much a result of his failure to establish a monolithic party that could sway large parts of the population.

### **Founding the Tōhōkai**

Nakano's turbulent withdrawal from the Kokumin Dōmei at the end of 1935, which was followed by the 1936 general election and the dramatic events of February 26, neither shook Nakano's faith in his approach nor triggered a frenzy of activity on his side. If anything, the February 26 events served as vindication of his beliefs and approach, and it is the relative calm - even lethargy - with which he approached politics over the next 30 months that is remarkable.

Nakano held on to his plan to create "a national mass movement that will become a force in pushing forward the changes of the times,"<sup>1</sup> but went about realizing it at a rather leisurely pace. He spent the spring of 1936 re-grouping his followers into a new party - a process that, in

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<sup>1</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo, Senkura Shobō [千倉書房], 1933), p. 116.

some ways, proved easier than launching the Kokumin Dōmei in 1932. One difference: Nakano was his own boss and was not kept waiting by a reluctant Adachi and a non-committed Yamaji faction. The party infrastructure was also already in place. Having placed many of the Kokumin Dōmei's mass activities and organizations under his direct control, Nakano salvaged them when he left the party in late 1935. Transforming the Tōhōkai think tank into a political party in May 1936 was thus a mere formality.<sup>2</sup> Renaming Miyake Setsurei's "*Gakan*" magazine "*Tōtairiku*" [東大陸], or "*Eastern Continent*,"<sup>3</sup> a month later and henceforth using it as the Tōhōkai's party organ was similarly straightforward. Finally, familiarity also played a role, as Nakano and his followers drew on their hard-won experience launching the Kokomin Domei in their second attempt to start a fascist party.

Still, though the new party was officially founded in mid-1936, it took another year for the first party convention to appoint party officials and determine the party's platform.<sup>4</sup> For those twelve months, the Tōhōkai was a far cry from a mass-based party. As late as May 1937, Nakano described the Tōhōkai as "a think tank that engages in practical research concerning politics, economics, foreign affairs, and national security. It is not a political party." He added, however, that "at some future date could serve as a core for a popular party."<sup>5</sup>

Two potential explanations, both ideological, present themselves for Nakano's slowness in

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<sup>2</sup> Up to May 1936, the Tōhōkai had been a cultural group [文化団体], but on May 25, of that year it became a political association [政治結社]. In order to underline the new beginning, Nakano moved the Tōhōkai's office to Akasaka, where it would remain until the end of his life. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> According to the preface of the first issue of *Tōtairiku* (June 1936) written by Miyake Setsurei, the title was chosen in order to emphasize the party's and the magazine's focus on East Asian Affairs, where many Asian people still lived under the rule of a Western minority. See Miyake Setsurei, "Changing from *Gakan* to *Tōtairiku*" [「我観」を「東大陸」と改題], in *Tōtairiku*, June 1936, inside cover.

<sup>4</sup> With some minor changes, the party's platform formulated in May 1937 was a continuation of the platform of the Kokumin Dōmei. See "Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead" [時論：東方会は斯く進む], in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead" [時論：東方会かく進む], in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, p. 7-8.



transforming the Tōhōkai into a mass party. He seems to have believed, for one, in the existence of a general historical pattern, according to which the era of liberalism was succeeded by the advent of social democracy; once that ideology's "inherently faulty nature was exposed," events would naturally bring "our [social nationalist] activities to the forefront."<sup>6</sup> Having identified this historical pattern, Nakano believed it would repeat itself in Japan, so his main task was waiting for nature to run its course.<sup>7</sup>

Second, perhaps influenced by Ishiwara Kanji's assumption that Japan needed at least ten peaceful years to prepare for the world's "final war," Nakano may have believed he had plenty of time to prepare the ground for political mass mobilization. The fact that the Tōhōkai's efforts to transform itself into a mass party gained momentum only after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, which rendered a ten-year preparation period impossible, seems to support Nakano's presumption that time was on his side.

Whatever the reasons behind Nakano's reluctance to apply himself fully to the task of making the Tōhōkai a mass party, during the first year of its existence, the party consisted of just its original members, its representatives in the Diet and the *Tōtairiku's* editorial staff. The Diet contingent, which formed the Tōhōkai's backbone, was comprised of the Nakano-faction's nine members<sup>8</sup> and three additional members who joined the party's ranks after the 1937 election: Ono Ken'ichi,<sup>9</sup> Mitamura Takeo<sup>10</sup> and Aoki Sakuo.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論：社大党とその歴史的役割], in *Tōtairiku*, June 1937, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Nakano was not alone in viewing the future of the Tōhōkai in such rosy colors. At around the same time the Japan Politics and Economics Research Institute came to a similar conclusion in writing about the party stating that Tōhōkai would become stronger in the future because it could rely on the support of industrial capitalist groups. See Japan Politics and Economics Research Institute [日本政治経済研究所], "The Tōhōkai under Nakano Seigō: Policies, Internal Organization, and Main Members" [中野正剛氏を盟主とする東方会の全貌：政策・内部組織並びに主要会員], (Tokyo, 1936), p.16.

<sup>8</sup> These were Nakano Seigō, Sugiura Takeo, Tanaka Kiyotatsu, Yutani Yoshinaru, Miura Torao, Watanabe Yasukuni, Ōishi Masaru, Baba Motoharu, and Kimura Takeo.

<sup>9</sup> Ono Ken'ichi [小野謙一] (1886 – 1963), journalist and politician.

Most of the Tōhōkai's Diet representatives were still traditional Japanese politicians. The power base in their electoral districts, the so-called "*jiban*" [地盤], was comprised of important local figures (so-called "*meibōka*" [名望家]) recruited from the provincial elites. Nakano himself owed his election to the Diet primarily to the support of Fukuoka elites, landowners, businessmen, and political leaders, rather than to the fact that he or his policies enjoyed nationwide support. Building a mass-based party meant circumventing these local power brokers, who acted as intermediaries between the voters on the periphery and party politicians at the center. The local *meibōka*, keen to keep their powerful positions, were not wholehearted supporters of a popular party.

The Tōhōkai members who set out to establish a base outside their traditional constituencies soon found the task was easier said than done. In the party's first year, only two members - Ōishi Masaru<sup>12</sup> and Kimura Takeo<sup>13</sup> - possessed popular constituencies independent from their traditional *jiban*, and in both cases each had been in place for a couple of years. Ōishi founded the 4,000-member Tosa Farmers' Union [土佐農民総組合], of which he later became president, in 1929. Kimura, likewise, founded and became president of the 2,000-member Yamagata Prefecture Farmers' Union [山形県農民総組合] in 1933.<sup>14</sup> The Tōhōkai's membership surge from 1936 to 1937 – when enrollment more than doubled from 3,275 to 10,037 – was

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<sup>10</sup> Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫] (1899 – 1964), former police man who had served in Manchuria before joining the Tōhōkai.

<sup>11</sup> Aoki Sakuo [青木作雄] (1898 - ?), businessman and politician.

<sup>12</sup> Ōishi Masaru [大石大] (1878 – 1966) politician and farmer activist.

<sup>13</sup> Kimura Takeo [木村武雄] (1902 – 1983) politician and farmer activist.

<sup>14</sup> For details about the Yamagata Prefecture Farmers' League see Kimura Takeo [木村武雄], "The Song of Komezawa Sonbin – an autobiography" [米沢そんぴんの歌：自伝], (Tokyo, 1978). For details about the Tosa Farmers' Union see Ōishi Masaru [大石大], "Eighty years of Windy Springs and Rainy Autumns – the autobiography of Ōishi Masaru [春風秋雨八十年：大石大自伝], (Kōchi, 1964).

mostly due to the influx of members from these two farmers' unions.<sup>15</sup> In fact, all the Tōhōkai members of Kōchi [Tosa] were originally members of Ōishi's Tosa Farmers' Union. Given that organic growth was taxing and time-consuming, other party members also sought to absorb already-existing parties, associations and unions into the Tōhōkai. Initially, at least, they had little success.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Tōhōkai Position in the Diet**

With no mass base to speak of, the Tōhōkai's activities were limited to the Diet's floor, where members – in the words of the Seiyūkai-affiliated *Fukuoka Daily* - strove daily to “denounce thoroughly the powerlessness of the ruling classes...attack the idleness and lack of policy direction of the cabinet, point out the contradiction between the Seiyūkai and the Minseitō...and thus cut their way into the camp of the government or governing party.”<sup>17</sup>

When Prime Minister Okada resigned over the February 26 incident, he was succeeded by Hirota Kōki, who inherited the difficult task of disciplining the rebellious army. To Nakano, who saw the February 26 rebellion as a genuine, if illegal, expression of the people's desire for political reform, Hirota's appointment was a scheme by Japan's conservative forces to halt the winds of change blowing over Japan. Hirota's cabinet was:

“born out of the [February 26] incident, yet only their terminology is reformist...Their words speak of action but in reality the cabinet is stuck in deadlock. A windless state in politics is thus slowly becoming established. This windless state is, however, certainly...pregnant with change. It is the windless moment before the wind changes its

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<sup>15</sup> See Nagai Kazu [永井和], “The Founding of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立]; in *Shirin* [史林]; Vol. LXI, No. 4 July 1978 footnote 4 p. 133 (619).

<sup>16</sup> Nagai provides us with a detailed description of how this worked in the case of Yutani Yoshiharu bringing mass-organization under the umbrella of the Tōhōkai in Tottori. See Nagai Kazu [永井和], “The Founding of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立]; in *Shirin* [史林]; Vol. LXI, No. 4; July 1978.

<sup>17</sup> See “Trends among small parties” [小会派の動向], in *Fukuoka Daily News* [福岡日日新聞] May 18, 1936.

direction.”<sup>18</sup>

Nakano thus saw the Hirota administration, like the Papen and Brüning cabinets that preceded Hitler’s rise to power,<sup>19</sup> as the calm before a storm. Hirota’s attempt to smooth relations with the Western Powers, in particular with England, likewise provoked criticism from both Nakano and the Tōhōkai. Even the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany displeased Nakano (who later would be one of Japan’s most vociferous supporters of the Tripartite Alliance), as it burdened relations with Russia. Instead of providing “a means to escape from the present predicament,” Nakano wrote, “in its result [the pact] has only intensified the crisis.”<sup>20</sup>

When not criticizing the government, the Tōhōkai continued advocating policies similar to those championed by the Kokumin Dōmei.<sup>21</sup> The Tōhōkai, for instance, often acted as the parliamentary mouthpiece of the army reformers close to Ishiwara Kanji, who aimed to establish a “high-degree national defense state.”<sup>22</sup> The party thus threw its support behind the reform proposals that Ishiwara Kanji submitted to the government in the second half of 1936. In the ensuing parliamentary debate, the Tōhōkai backed the army reformers’ calls for a large armament budget and economic controls. When neither Ishiwara’s reform proposal nor his five-year economic plan passed, the army withdrew its minister, effectively bringing the Hirota cabinet down in early 1937. The army’s reformers, and with them Nakano’s Tōhōkai, all had reason to be

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<sup>18</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1936, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, November 1936, p. 9-10.

<sup>20</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Tōtairiku*, January 1937, p. 2-5.

<sup>21</sup> See for example Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Tōtairiku* [東大陸] October, 1936, p. 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Ishiwara’s proposal included plans to expand government controls over strategically important armament industries (e.g. the aircraft industry), plans to increase the office of the Prime Minister, and a plan for economic expansion called “Five-Year Plan for the Empire’s Income and Expenditures.” Ishiwara also considered the establishment of a dictatorial political party, which would replace all the other parties or at least dominate the Diet.

hopeful when Hayashi Senjūrō<sup>23</sup> was appointed to form the next cabinet, because Ishiwara Kanji was to assist Hayashi in selecting the cabinet's members. When the conservative opposition to Hayashi's reliance on Ishiwara caused Hayashi to dismiss Ishiwara, however, Nakano and the Tōhōkai quickly turned against the Hayashi cabinet.<sup>24</sup> In the April 1937 issue of *Tōtairiku* Nakano wrote:

“From its inception, the Hayashi cabinet has taken a form that betrayed its supporters. Those who placed great expectations in Hayashi - the forces that have pushed him to the forefront of the contemporary situation - were treated as complete strangers once the Hayashi cabinet had been established...Put differently, the Hayashi cabinet surrendered the role according to which it should have been the puppet of the reform forces and instead continued the tradition of the Saitō and Okada cabinets, becoming an heir to the forces maintaining the status quo...The crisis is thus left to ferment, with the risk that it will explode at some later stage.”<sup>25</sup>

While Nakano's support for the army reforms seemed total to the outside world - after listening to one of Nakano's speeches, outspoken military critic and MP Saitō Takeo<sup>26</sup> described Nakano as the “army spokesman”<sup>27</sup> – it was not unconditional. As before, Nakano stressed that “national defense in the larger sense will be the subject of politics, while the military will be in charge of national defense in the narrow sense.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hayashi Senjūrō [林銑十郎] (1876 – 1943), army officer and politician.

<sup>24</sup> According to Nagai: “If things had worked out all right, the Hayashi Cabinet ... could have been the Strong National Unity cabinet, which Nakano had hoped for. Or perhaps it is better to say, that it was this very Hayashi Cabinet which showed that a Strong Cabinet was impossible.” Nagai Kazu [永井 和], “The Founding of the Tōhōkai”, p. 138 (624).

<sup>25</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: the contradictions of the Hayashi cabinet” [時論：林内閣の矛盾] in *Tōtairiku*, April 1937, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Saitō Takao [斎藤隆夫] (1870-1949), politician best known for an anti-militaristic speech held in the Diet in 1940.

<sup>27</sup> See the February 18, 1937 entry in Saitō's diary. Saitō Takao [斎藤隆夫], “The Diary of Saitō Takao” [斎藤隆夫日記], ed. Itō Takashi [伊藤隆], (Tokyo, 2009), vol. 2, p. 227.

<sup>28</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead”, in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, p. 9.

In practice, Nakano's distinction led the Tōhōkai to take a contradictory position. On one hand, the party would criticize the government and the established parties for their inability or unwillingness to implement the army reforms necessary to establish a national defense state. On the other, whenever the government proposed a large military budget, Nakano and his followers would criticize them for ignoring the people's economic needs. The party demanded that the burden of large military expenditures be fairly distributed so as not to put too much strain on the common people and that complementary economic controls be adopted to ensure the livelihood of farmers, workers and small business owners. When the Hirota Cabinet passed a military budget of unprecedented proportions, the Tōhōkai said, "they leave everything in the hands of the bureaucrats only protect the established capital, while on the other hand they intervene in the economy and thus obstruct the expansion of production."<sup>29</sup> In demanding both canons and butter, the Tōhōkai's position was fundamentally contradictory. Being a small splinter group in the Diet, however, perhaps helped them get away with this sort of populist dichotomy.

### **The 1937 General Election**

The February 1937 election was, at best, a moderate success for the Tōhōkai. The party entered the election with little preparation but its members harbored a great ambition to "become the core of the great political party that would be in charge of Japan's future."<sup>30</sup> The major party platform items were cultivating national strength, implementing economic controls to expand productive capacity quickly, overcoming class struggle through totalitarianism, and protecting the livelihood of Japan's farmers and workers. Of the 20 candidates the Tōhōkai put into the race, Nakano expected about 14 or 15 to succeed. In the end, only 11 (joined subsequently by a

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<sup>29</sup> See the *Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Police* [特高月報], December, 1936.

<sup>30</sup> See the Tōhōkai's election platform and party manifesto in Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead", in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, p. 9.

twelfth) did.<sup>31</sup> Compared to the 1936 election, which Nakano's followers had entered completely unprepared and in which they had gained 207,271 votes (corresponding to 1.9% of all votes cast), in 1937, they won only slightly more, claiming 221,445 votes (or 2.2% of the total).<sup>32</sup> This made the Tōhōkai the Diet's fourth-strongest party – even weaker than the Social Mass Party, which held 36 seats.<sup>33</sup> Though Nakano was likely disappointed with the results,<sup>34</sup> his public statements remained upbeat:

“If the Tōhōkai, having been a practice-oriented think tank for many years, has succeeded in winning a total of 250,000 votes, securing a seat in the Diet for 11 of its members, five of whom won with the highest number of votes in their electoral districts, then self-respect demands that this be seen as a promise for the future in which we shall act as the core of the nationalistic reform camp.”<sup>35</sup>

Nakano added that “the votes in the Diet are determined by the number of heads, but the trends within the Diet are influenced by the ideals and vitality of a minority. Have we not succeeded in doing that?”<sup>36</sup> Whatever disappointment Nakano may have felt, moreover, was soon assuaged by the fall of the Hayashi cabinet and, more importantly, by the prospect that the next cabinet would be formed by Konoe Fumimaro.

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<sup>31</sup> Nine of these had already been members of parliament before the election, and two were elected for the first time. Those re-elected were: Watanabe Yasukuni [渡辺泰邦] from Hokkaidō, Kimura Takeo [木村武雄] from Yamagata, Sugiura Takeo [杉浦武雄] from Aichi, Tanaka Kiyotatsu [田中養達] from Shiga, Ōishi Masaru [大石大] from Kōchi, Baba Motoharu [馬場元治] from Nagasaki, Miura Torao [三浦虎雄] from Miyazaki, and Nakano from Fukuoka. Newly elected were: Aoki [青木作雄] from Yamaguchi, Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫] from Gifu, and Ono Ken'ichi [小野謙一] from Aomori. These eleven were joined in December by Yutani Yoshiharu [由谷議治] from Tottori, who had first failed to be elected but then received a seat in parliament replacing a disqualified candidate from another party.

<sup>32</sup> See Nagai Kazu [永井和], “The Founding of the Tōhōkai”, p.130.

<sup>33</sup> The Minseitō had lost 27 seats bringing its total down to 179 seats in the Diet. The Seiyūkai had gained 3 seats bringing its total up to 175, while the Social Mass Party had gained 18 bringing it to 36.

<sup>34</sup> See Nakano Yasuo vol. 2, p. 242-45.

<sup>35</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead”, in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. but also quoted in Inomata, p. 374 – 76.

### **The Konoe Cabinet**

Nakano had good reason to believe that Ishiwara's reformers, and even he himself, might be assigned important positions in the Konoe administration. Konoe's political views, for one, were in many respects similar to Nakano's. Konoe, like Nakano, had attended the 1919 Paris Peace conference and come away greatly disappointed. In subsequent years, Konoe spoke out continuously against the international order based on the Versailles treaty system and advocated its revision. And, like Nakano, Konoe favored internal reforms - though events revealed his commitment on this point was not as strong as Nakano might have wished.

While the two men could not have been more different in terms of social background (Konoe came from an aristocratic court family), the overlap in their political views led them to deepen their personal ties over the years. Nakano had known Konoe since his student days (the first Chinese boarder that the Nakanos took on had stayed previously with the Konoe family) and met him again in Paris in 1919. Their relationship grew tenuous afterward, but after the Manchurian Incident it was revived through frequent meetings and political discussions, which often took place in Ishiwara Kanji's presence.

Nakano was thus gravely disappointed when neither he nor Ishiwara nor Itagaki Seishirō were included in Konoe's first cabinet in June 1937. Nakano's disillusionment was rendered even more painful when it was revealed that two of Nakano's peers had won cabinet slots. Nagai Ryūtarō, who had been a member of the Minseitō's Adachi faction but had stayed behind when Adachi and Nakano left the party in late 1931, became Minister of Communications. Kazami Akira, who had followed Nakano from Waseda into journalism and then later into the Minseitō and Kokumin Dōmei - but not into the Tōhōkai - was offered the position of Cabinet Secretary. According to Mitamura, when asked, Konoe explained his decision not to include Nakano as follows:



“Nakano is a fine and very knowledgeable man, but he has one fault. He cannot keep a secret. You cannot tell him anything secret, because he will reveal it immediately. If he were to become minister, he would not keep any of the cabinet’s secrets. He would leak them all. If he could only correct that one point, then he would indeed be a splendid politician.”<sup>37</sup>

It is not entirely clear what indiscretion of Nakano’s Konoe was referring to, but it is likely that Nakano’s supposed inability to keep a secret was only part of Konoe’s reluctance. At least as important was the fact that Nakano had very little to offer to Konoe. By including Nagai, Konoe could hope to win the support of the Minseitō, at least in part. Nakano’s party, by contrast, was not only small but also ideologically committed to supporting Konoe’s reformist drive. Konoe had no need to pay for something to which he could already lay claim. Nakano, meanwhile, did not show his disappointment about not being included in Konoe’s cabinet. The two men remained on friendly terms and Nakano continued supporting Konoe’s reform agenda from the political periphery.

### **War with China**

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937, only a month after Konoe’s accession to power, posed a great challenge to Konoe’s cabinet - one so great that it ultimately caused the administration to fall. The war in China also put an end to the cooperation between Nakano and Ishiwara, which had been the dominant alliance guiding Nakano’s activities over the past five years. Between the Manchurian and the Chinese Incidents, Ishiwara and Nakano argued that Japan should carry out internal reforms before taking international action. Only after Japan’s industries had been modernized and Manchuria’s resources fully integrated into Japan’s economy – a process Ishiwara believed would take about ten years – would the country be ready to wage war. Ishiwara thus tried everything in his power – an effort that was ultimately in vain - to de-

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<sup>37</sup> Konoe quoted in Mitamura who obtained the information through an unnamed member of the cabinet. Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Committed Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刃したか], (Tokyo 1949), p. 145.

escalate the Chinese conflict and have it settled through diplomatic negotiations.

While Nakano did not oppose a diplomatic settlement, he argued that Japan's vastly superior military power would let it settle the conflict quickly by force if Chinese resistance rendered a negotiated settlement unrealistic. Based on the experience of recent conflicts, Nakano predicted that war between China and Japan would follow one of two possible patterns. Given Japan's military superiority, it could end quickly in China's defeat, as had Italy's war against Ethiopia. Alternatively, it could develop into a longer war by proxy, similar to the conflict in Spain, where competing powers supplied the local population with arms but did not get directly involved.<sup>38</sup> Nakano's reasoning, outlined in articles and speeches before and after the conflict broke out, wavered back and forth between these two lines of argument. His predictions hinged on whether or not the Powers would interfere on China's behalf. In September 1936, Nakano wrote that if Japan should invade China:

“America, which said it would come to help China, would not come. Russia, too, would not come. England would not come either. While they would all stay away, Japan and China would enter a full-blown war. China might put up a fight, but it is clear that in the end it would be defeated.”<sup>39</sup>

Accordingly, Nakano believed that Japan could win a quick victory through a decisive blow against the Nationalist regime, which, in his eyes, lacked Chinese citizens' loyalty. Echoing the army hard liners, Nakano even went so far as to deny the existence of Chinese nationalism, because China had not yet developed into a “modern nation.”<sup>40</sup> Throughout the fall of 1937, he

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<sup>38</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “The bandits in the Mountains and the Bandits in the Heart” [山中の賊と心中の賊] memorial address held on September 10, 1936 at the Japan Youth Hall on behalf of two journalists of the *Tokyo Daily News* killed in an anti-Japanese incident and reprinted under the title “The Pillar of East Asia: Japan” [東洋の支柱、日本], in “Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛氏大演説集], (Tokyo: Asakaze-sha [朝風社], 1936), p. 419.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 418.

<sup>40</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, September 1937, p. 3.

predicted that the Chinese would soon sue for peace or, failing that, that the nation would collapse after Japanese forces took the capital, Nanking.<sup>41</sup> When the fall of Nanking in December 1937 did not result in China's unconditional surrender, Nakano argued that the conquests of Hankow and Hainan Island would finally make the Nationalist government "crumble."<sup>42</sup> The longer the Chinese nationalist regime under Chiang Kai-shek resisted Japanese occupation, however, the more Nakano came to believe that the Chinese government was kept in place by the Powers and that the war could become a protracted proxy conflict similar to the Spanish civil war. Accordingly, he came to believe Japan was not fighting against the Chinese but rather against foreign influences - first England and, in later years, also the USA, both working through the Nationalist government. Eventually, this perspective led Nakano to argue that ending the war in China would require Japan to confront England directly.

While Ishiwara's assessment of the Chinese conflict was vindicated by subsequent events, Nakano's optimism was proven wrong. Japanese forces failed to bring down both the Nationalist government in Chungking and the communist regime in Yen'an, and the war proved to be a crippling drain on the Japanese economy. In 1937-8, however, Ishiwara was alone in opposing the war's escalation. Increasingly isolated, Ishiwara found that the war marked the beginning of his fall within the army. It also marked the end of his cooperation with Nakano.

### **A New Start: Trip to Europe**

The break with Ishiwara was just one of many developments that caused Nakano to fundamentally reconsider his political position in the winter of 1937-8. Others included his

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<sup>41</sup> See for example, Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論] in *Tōtairiku* September, October and November issues of 1937. See also Nakano's farewell address before leaving for Europe held November 11, 1937 reprinted in December 1937 issue of *Tōtairiku*.

<sup>42</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "The one and only Way to Peace" [和平への唯一の通路], speech delivered at the Tōhōkai party rally held at the Hibiya Public Hall, on July 11, 1938, reprinted as "Strengthen our Foreign Policy" [対外国策を強化せよ] in *Tōtairiku*, August 1938, p. 2.

exclusion from the Konoe cabinet; Nagai and Kazami's inclusion in the same; and, finally, the outcome of the 1937 general election, which put Nakano's political calculation into question. Following the Manchurian Incident, Nakano had cast himself as the legal representative of the radical reformist right. While Kita Ikki, Ishiwara Kanji, Itagaki Seishirō, and many of their followers sought to realize the reformist program through illegal, sometimes even terrorist, acts, Nakano sought to create a mass party that would gain enough influence to carry out the same reforms legally. When he saw how much popular sympathy the violent extremists won, however, he also had to acknowledge that the people would not cast their vote for a party that advocated achieving the same reformist aims through non-violent means. It was probably the sum of these setbacks, along with both intellectual curiosity and the hope for a new start, that pushed Nakano to travel to Italy and Germany in the winter of 1937-8. The trip gave him a chance to take a fresh look at politics and stimulated him to start anew upon his return.

In his pre-departure radio addresses and speeches, Nakano stated that he traveled to Europe as an “envoy of the people” [国民の使節], not “bound by the policies of Japan's government” but only by his “loyalty to the nation and to the entire people of Japan.” He boldly added that “the power of an individual is stronger than the power of the government.”<sup>43</sup> Nakano described the trip's aims as twofold.<sup>44</sup> First, he wanted to lend support to the peace maneuvers that Germany, through the offices of its ambassadors Dirksen in Tokyo and Trautmann in Nanking, was carrying out on Japan's behalf in China. As it happened, developments in China - the Rape of Nanking and Konoe's announcement of an irrevocable end to interactions with the Nationalist government –

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<sup>43</sup> Although Nakano did not travel as a representative of the Japanese government, he was equipped with a letter of introduction penned by Nakayama Yū and signed by Prime Minister Konoe. The letter is reproduced in Inomata p. 382-84.

<sup>44</sup> On the day of his departure, November 11, 1937 Nakano held an address on the Tokyo International Radio Station laying out the purpose of his voyage to Germany and Italy. The quotes are taken from Nakano's farewell speech held November 11, 1937 at the Gunji Kaikan in Kudanshita, which is reproduced in Nakano Seigō, “Upon Departing” [出遊に臨みて], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1937, p. 97-113, the quote is taken from p.102.

during Nakano's travels rendered this first objective redundant. The reports he delivered after his return make no mention of it.

Second, Nakano wanted to sound out both Italy and Germany on the prospect of expanding the Anti-Comintern Pact (signed between Japan and Germany in 1936, and joined by Italy in November 1937), into a more comprehensive military alliance. Nakano believed that if Japan forged a deeper alliance with Germany and Italy, the relationship might put a check on Russian and English support for China's resistance against Japan.

A crowd of 3,000 saw Nakano off on November 11, 1937 with a farewell party, speeches and a procession (complete with flag bearers and the Waseda marching band) that ended in three shouts of "Banzai!" at the Imperial Palace gates. Before leaving the country, Nakano held farewell speeches in Osaka, Kobe, Fukuoka, and Shimonoseki; during the trip, he addressed Japanese expatriate communities in Hong Kong, Singapore and Colombo. All told, some 30,000 people are said to have listened to Nakano's addresses before and during his journey to Europe. Traveling in the company of his secretary, Shintō Kazuma, and two interpreters, Kuroda Reiji<sup>45</sup> and Shimomura Nobusada,<sup>46</sup> Nakano used the six weeks of sailing time to read, among other things, Mussolini's autobiography (he had read Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in its English translation a year earlier). After arriving in Italy in mid-December, Nakano used the offices of the Japanese embassy to obtain a meeting with Mussolini and Count Ciano, Italy's Foreign Minister and Mussolini's son-in-law. Since neither Mussolini nor Ciano left an account of the meeting with Nakano, we must rely on the descriptions Nakano gave upon his return to Japan. Clearly flattered by the opportunity to meet with Mussolini, Nakano recounted with much delight (and at some length) that the meeting had lasted much longer than originally planned and described Mussolini's open, almost casual tone, contrasting it sharply with the fretful attention to

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<sup>45</sup> Kuroda Reiji [黒田礼二] (1890–1943), journalist, German expert and translator of various German books including Hitler's "Mein Kampf."

<sup>46</sup> Shimomura Nobusada [下村信禎] (1899 - ?), Fukuoka-born Diplomat.

diplomatic etiquette paid by the members of the Japanese embassy in Rome.

As for the possible expansion of cooperation between the three countries, Mussolini agreed heartily with Nakano's geopolitical views and offered Italy's support in the struggle against China, while noting he believed Japan was unlikely to need help settling the conflict in the near term. Mussolini also shared Nakano's desire to expand the Anti-Comintern Pact into a full-blown military alliance. At the end of their conversation, Mussolini said: "If Japan makes up its mind and rises, Italy will shake Japan's hand. I don't mean the Anti-Comintern Pact - I mean a full-fledged military alliance or even an across-the-board political alliance." When Nakano asked whether he could quote Mussolini on this, the Italian leader replied: "Tell Konoe and the leaders of the army and the navy that not only is this my intention but also that these were my very words."<sup>47</sup>

During the last days of December 1937, Nakano proceeded to Germany. Obtaining a meeting with Hitler proved much harder than it had been with Mussolini, and only after meeting with most of the other Nazi leaders in the course of January was Nakano finally received by Hitler in early February.<sup>48</sup> German newspapers of the time left the visit largely unmentioned and any memos that may have been prepared by the German Foreign Service have not survived, so Nakano's account is the only extant source of the meeting.<sup>49</sup> According to his description, the meeting with Hitler seems to have been less amicable and open than the meeting with the Italian

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<sup>47</sup> Mussolini quoted by Nakano Seigō in "People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany" [国民よ起きて — 独伊より帰りて], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1938, p. 32-33.

<sup>48</sup> Through the persistence of Army attaché (later ambassador) Ōshima Hiroshi [大島浩] Nakano was able to obtain a meeting with soon-to-be foreign Minister Ribbentrop. Once Nakano had passed that hurdle, however, he was not only given the opportunity to meet with the entire Nazi leadership, including Goering, Goebbels, Himmler, Rosenberg, and many others, but also visit some strategic factories and finally also meet with Hitler himself on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938.

<sup>49</sup> The German Archives have no record of the meeting between Nakano and the Nazi leadership. See letter from the Bundesarchiv in Berlin to the author dated February 9, 2007. The second morning edition of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of February 2, 1938, p. 2 mentions Nakano's meeting with Hitler with seven lines: "Berlin February 1 (dpa). The Fuehrer and Chancellor received on Tuesday Nakano Seigō, Japanese Member of Parliament and leader of the 'German-Japanese Comradeship' in Tokyo." This author was unable to do research in the Italian archives.

leader, but, as with Mussolini, Nakano met with Hitler for longer than had been scheduled.

While Hitler offered no help against China, he made clear that “Germany’s attitude toward the Sino-Japanese Incident is rather simple. Germany has no territorial ambitions in the Far East.” Hitler wished only for the opportunity to trade in peace with a prosperous Far East. He also expressed his fear that the Chinese conflict might weaken Japan, which would not be in Germany’s interest because “ahead of Japan and Germany there is a formidable task [i.e. the revision of the post-WW1 international order] and in order to reach our objective we wish to have a strong ally in Japan.”<sup>50</sup>

### **Back to Japan: Advocating Closer Ties with Germany and Italy**

When he returned to Japan in early March 1938, Nakano brought with him not only souvenirs including Mussolini’s and Ciano’s signed photographs, a bust of Hitler and a camera from Ribbentrop, but also the conviction that expanding the Anti-Comintern Pact into a wider alliance was necessary. He reported his impressions and the contents of his conversations with Mussolini, Hitler and other important Italian and German government figures first to Konoe, and then, through a series of lectures, talks and radio broadcasts, to a broader audience.<sup>51</sup> Nakano’s message was that both Hitler and Mussolini were men of the people (he noted that both men rose from humble origins to the highest offices) who spoke simple, clear language devoid of deceit or calculation, and stressed that it took a man of the people such as himself, rather than Japan’s diplomatic elites, to understand such leaders.

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<sup>50</sup> Hitler quoted in Nakano Seigō “People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany”, p. 32-34.

<sup>51</sup> The days after his return to Japan were filled with relating his impressions to various people and groups. On March 7 he met with Prime Minister Konoe for one and a half hours, on March 8 he spoke on the radio, on the 11 he held a speech before a military audience, on the 13 he spoke at a Tōhōkai speech rally at Hibiya Public Hall, on the 14<sup>th</sup> he lectured the officers of the navy, and on the 16<sup>th</sup> before the army general staff. The contents of the speech at Hibiya Public Hall were subsequently published in the April 1938 issue of Tōtairiku under the Title “People Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany” [国民よ起きて — 独伊より帰りて] and in a pamphlet published separately under the title “Go Straight Forward” [まっすぐに行け probably a translation of the Italian “Avanti!”].

The most important insight that Nakano took away from his meetings with Europe's fascist leaders was that Japan, Italy and Germany shared a common objective in revising the international order enshrined after WW1 in the League of Nations system. According to Nakano, the political will to "correct and overcome the unjust Versailles Treaty System that presently governs the world and to [instead] establish true justice in the world" provided a basis for much more than a "treaty for the purpose of common defense against communism." Germany, Italy and Japan should:

"reach out to each other in order to reconstruct today's international order. At present, the world is being bullied by the status-quo faction, with England at the center and Russia, France and the vast USA acting as allies...The Versailles Treaty System governing the world at present is evil. The outcome of the Great War is evil. Correcting these wrongs is Japan's responsibility as well as the responsibility of Germany and Italy, who have stood up in cooperation with Japan."<sup>52</sup>

Based on these findings and his own analysis of Japan's role in international relations, Nakano - who only two years earlier had opposed the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern pact under the Hirota cabinet - now became a fervent advocate of closer ties among these three countries. He took on the cause with so much enthusiasm, in fact, that until the conclusion of the Triple Alliance in 1940 the project was among the most important items on the Tōhōkai's foreign policy agenda.

### **Re-launching the Tōhōkai as a Mass-Based Party**

The need for Japan to seek closer ties with Germany and Italy was not the only conclusion that Nakano drew from his voyage to Europe. He also seems to have been inspired personally. His son Yasuo recalled that the various setbacks Nakano had suffered before leaving for Europe had made his father nervous, even depressed. After his return, however, Nakano oozed self-

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<sup>52</sup> Nakano Seigō "People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany", p. 3-4.



confidence and vitality, as well as an overpowering will to act.

Greatly impressed with the two fascist rulers and their regimes, Nakano had finally come to fully embrace the fascist model for his own party. As has been shown, in the first half of the 1930s, Nakano advocated a stronger executive but did not yet exclusively commit to fascism as the only form in which such governance could be realized. As late as May 1936, he described “England’s Baldwin government and the Roosevelt administration in the USA” as examples of governments “engaging in strong politics, while even Mussolini’s regime in Italy or Hitler’s regime in Germany have engaged in a similar, if somewhat different, sort of strong politics.” All, in his eyes, had “acknowledged what needed to be done, taken leadership of the people, mobilized the passion of the entire people, and made this the foundation of their powerful politics.”<sup>53</sup> After his trip to Germany and Italy in 1937, fascism became Nakano’s political model of choice for both Japan and the Tōhōkai. Nakano’s conversion to full-fledged fascism meant, among other things, giving the Tōhōkai the external appearance of a fascist party. Members were offered mass-produced (and hence low-priced) uniforms consisting of a dark navy blue shirt with a red tie, khaki-colored riding trousers, a black military cap, and an arm band inscribed with the Chinese character for “East” [東].<sup>54</sup> The Tōhōkai youth organization, Tōhō-Seinen-Tai [東方青年隊], was organized around paramilitary lines and members wore uniforms modeled on those of the German SS: a black shirt, black hat, and red arm band displaying the same Chinese character. Nakano also mimicked the European fascist parties in terms of activities, pouring his newly-found energy into speech rallies, demonstrations, signature campaigns, and other forms of mass agitation. He even started lengthening his speeches to well over three hours in imitation of

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<sup>53</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Strong politics versus authoritarian politics” [強力政治か強権政治か], in *Gakan*, May 1936, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Since clothing had become rationed, the relatively low price of the uniform made it an attractive buy in the eyes of many party members.

Hitler's speech marathons.<sup>55</sup> Nakano's physical appearance changed so remarkably that his life-long friend Ogata commented: "His black wanabe fascist uniform, the emblem resembling the Nazi *Hakenkreuz* [swastika] on his arm band and his trips to Europe - all that made me think he had gone crazy."<sup>56</sup> Despite these and other mocking comments, Nakano held on to the uniforms and rallies.<sup>57</sup>

Most importantly, Nakano and his followers took up the project of creating a mass-based popular party with new energy. They followed the same approach they had used before, trying to incorporate already-existing mass organizations into the party. What was new this time were the large membership windfalls caused by the inflow of former left-wing activists whose organizations had been destroyed after the Popular Front Incident<sup>58</sup> and who hoped to find a new home, as well as a shield against political oppression, in the Tōhōkai. Accordingly, most members who joined the party in 1938-9 came from one of two sources: the farmers' movement (most often these recruits were former affiliates of the All-Japan Farmers' Union [全国農民組合]) or the labor and citizen movements of the urban areas. Many of the left-wing activists who joined the Tōhōkai did not come alone but rather in groups, maintaining their relationships with the "comrades" of the organization to which they had formerly belonged. On occasion, entire unions entered the Tōhōkai.

Absorbing already-existing organizations into its fold was a double-edged sword for the

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<sup>55</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2 p. 335 and p. 360.

<sup>56</sup> Ogata, p. 23.

<sup>57</sup> When the *manga* writer, Kondo Hidezō, interviewed Nakano in 1942, he mocked him saying: "Ohhhh, so this is the symbol of your society. I see. It's just the same as that of the Nazis. What do I make of that? I guess if I were a moderately intelligent person, I would have to dislike it simply on reasons of good taste." Kondō Hidezō in *Manga* [漫画], January, 1942 quoted in Inomata, p. 395.

<sup>58</sup> The term "Popular Front Incident" [人民戦線事件] does not refer to a singular incident, but rather to a number of activities and the state's reaction to these. Following the outbreak of the war with China, various left-wing groups had organized a "Popular Front" against fascism. Subsequently the state suppressed these activities. Over 400 left-wing activists were arrested between December 1937 and February 1938 and left-wing parties such as the Japan Proletarian Party [日本無産党] were dissolved.

Tōhōkai. On one hand, it made for spectacular increases in the party's size. Membership surged from 10,296 at the end of 1938 to 25,145 one year later. By the end of 1940 it reached 31,625.<sup>59</sup> Absorbing the labor unions also gave the party a more urban character. Apart from Nakano, in the 1937 election the party fielded only candidates from rural areas and provincial cities, ignoring urban voters almost entirely. By 1942, roughly a quarter of the party's votes came from one of Japan's six urban centers, and Tōhōkai candidates from urban centers such as Tokyo, Kyōto and Hyōgo were elected successfully to the Diet.<sup>60</sup> While the Tōhōkai could never claim to represent a major part of the Japanese people, by 1942 it could at least claim to be representing both rural and urban constituencies.

Dramatic growth had also its drawbacks. The influx of many of former left-wing activists caused the Tōhōkai to become anything but an ideologically unified and homogeneous body. Many newcomers kept their left-wing ideas, as the Tōhōkai's original party members never required that new entrants abandon contrary notions. Many unabashed left-wingers, in fact, joined hoping that the Tōhōkai's nationalist character would shield them against police oppression while they continued pursuing their political aims. To them, the Tōhōkai was a little more than a cover or safe haven, and, as Arima has pointed out, the only ideological compromise they were asked to make was to "repaint"<sup>61</sup> [塗り替える] their policies in such a way that their demands were no longer made in the interest of a particular economic class but rather in the interest of the nation as a whole.

The division between the first-generation members, i.e. the MPs around Nakano, and the second generation of incoming left-wing activists was more than just ideological. The two groups

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<sup>59</sup> See Arima Manabu [有馬学], *The Organization and Policies of the Tōhōkai* [東方会の組織と政策]; in *Shi-en* [史淵] Kyūshū Daigaku Bungaku-bu [九州大学文学部], No. 114; 1977.3, p. 69.

<sup>60</sup> For an analysis of the geographical distribution of the Tōhōkai's voters and how it compared to that of other parties see Nagai Kazu [永井和], "The Founding of the Tōhōkai", p.134-35.

<sup>61</sup> See Arima Manabu [有馬学], "The Organization and Policies of the Tōhōkai", p. 69.

also differed in their approach to political mobilization – and here lay the potential synergies. Nakano and his first-generation followers hailed largely from prominent provincial families and had entered politics with the support of other influential provincial men. Though they had had some mass-movement experiences during the Kokumin Dōmei days, their approach to mass mobilization remained largely academic. Nakano, for example, asked one of his followers, Sekiyama Shigetarō [関山茂太郎], to study mass mobilization at the party headquarters through reading works by Hitler and Lenin, only to learn later that these theories were difficult to apply to Japanese reality.

Through trial and error, Nakano came quickly to rely on the newcomers' expertise. He leaned most notably on farmers' movement activists such as Yutani Yoshiharu,<sup>62</sup> Inamura Ryūichi,<sup>63</sup> Awatani Yūzō,<sup>64</sup> and Tanabe Osamu,<sup>65</sup> as well as on labor movement activists such as Atariyama Kiyoshi<sup>66</sup> (formerly a member of the labor union of which Nakano had been president) and Makabe Takuo [真壁卓夫]. Each brought a wealth of practical experience in mass organization and agitation.

Not all those who joined the party after 1938 were “converts” [転向者] from left-wing organizations. The Tōhōkai also attracted many men who had never belonged to another political party, left-wing or otherwise, and who joined because the Tōhōkai's slogans and policies genuinely impressed them. The Tōhōkai members of this third generation were largely younger and, unlike those of the other two generations, received their political formation in the Tōhōkai. What they lacked in political experience they made up for with youthful fervor.

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<sup>62</sup> Yutani Yoshiharu [由谷義治] (1888 – 1958) businessman and politician from Tottori city.

<sup>63</sup> Inamura Ryūichi [稲村隆一] (1898 – 1990) farmer movement activist.

<sup>64</sup> Awatani Yūzō [淡谷悠蔵] (1897 - ?), farmer movement activist and politician.

<sup>65</sup> Tanabe Osamu [田辺納] (1902 – 1980) farmer movement activist from Osaka.

<sup>66</sup> Atariyama Kiyoshi [当山清] (1901 – 1980), labor activist.

Recruits of this third generation came from a diverse array of sources. The great majority were recruited into the Tōhōkai through its youth organization, which was centered on the Waseda chapter and led by Miyasaki Yoshimasa<sup>67</sup> and Takao Shinji.<sup>68</sup> Similar youth chapters were founded at all other major Japanese universities.<sup>69</sup> A small minority of third-generation Tōhōkai – including former dorm students Shintō Kazuma, Hasegawa Shun, Chiba Masahira, and Nagata Masayoshi – joined because they knew Nakano personally. Personal connections also brought Shibata Tokuo [柴田徳雄], the nephew of Nakano's primary school teacher Shibata Fumishiro, to the party. This group, though small in numbers, proved to be most loyal. Demobilized army veterans comprised another source of new members; Satō Morio<sup>70</sup> from Kurume City in Fukuoka, for instance, who had been injured while fighting in China, returned to Japan with a couple of shrapnel pieces in his body and was thereafter a strong advocate of England's expulsion from Asia.<sup>71</sup>

The relative size, influence, and representation of these three generations within the Tōhōkai remains unclear. If the Tōhōkai's Tokyo chapter is representative of the whole, however, then at the height of the party's expansion in the years 1938-41, second-generation left-wing "converts" comprised half the total, with third-generation members and a small minority of first-

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<sup>67</sup> Miyasaki Yoshimasa [宮崎吉政] (1915 - ?), Tōhōkai member, later journalist.

<sup>68</sup> Sometimes the latter is also called Takatera Shinji [高寺信次].

<sup>69</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 369.

<sup>70</sup> Satō Morio [佐藤守男] (? - ?), leader of the Tōhōkai Youth organization.

<sup>71</sup> Even though Nakano at one point expressed his hope that battle-hardened decommissioned soldiers would come to play an important role in a popular movement, similar to that they played in the German Nazi movement, this never happened, because full demobilization did not take place until 1945, and the few men who got discharged before that on account of some injury, quickly found employment in Japan's overheated economy, leaving them little time to engage in politics. Accordingly the Tōhōkai could never draw from a large pool of brutalized and idle war veterans, which swelled the ranks of the Nazi movement in its early years. See Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: Youth and Training" [時論：青年と錬成], in *Tōtairiku*, September, 1942, p. 8.

generation veterans accounting for the remainder.<sup>72</sup> Nagai, who analyzed the occupants of the Tōhōkai's most influential positions in the years 1937-41, has examined in detail these three generations' respective influence within the party.<sup>73</sup> He shows that, generally, the core group of original party founders was able to maintain control over the party's top positions (occupying 100%, 80% and 88% of the three highest-ranking positions in the years 1937, 1939 and 1941 respectively),<sup>74</sup> as well as its platform and direction. While they remained dominant through control of positions such as secretary general [幹事長] (occupied throughout the party's existence by Nakano), Organization Propaganda Section Leader [組織宣伝部長] and Political Investigation Section Leader [政務調査部長], the first generation retired gradually from daily party business and handed these responsibilities over to younger members.

In the lower-ranking positions, the second generation was generally better-represented than the third (in 1941, these two groups held 40% and 18%, respectively, of all open positions), but third-generation members' rate of entry into influential offices grew faster between 1939-41 than that of the second generation. These lower-ranking positions (e.g. leading provincial party branches) gave officials much closer contact to party foot soldiers and voters, and thus provided an important channel of information from the electorate to the party leadership. The increasing presence and influence of the second- and third-generation members within the party reflected its evolution from a traditional "Diet-Men Party" [議員政党] to a "mass party" [大衆政党].

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<sup>72</sup> The assumption is questionable, for Tokyo was hardly representative of the country as a whole, but for lack of anything better statistics, this author has accepted Nagai's guess and the assumptions that it is based on. See Nagai Kazu [永井和], "The Development of the Tōhōkai", p. 114.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>74</sup> The nomenclature of the party's offices changed over time but for simplicity's sake we might say that the secretary general [幹事長] had the function of president, while directors [総務] and councilors [評議員] had a word in making important decisions [審議権] without leading others directly. Direct leadership was exercised by the secretary general [幹事長] and the section leaders [専門部長] while the Permanent Secretaries [常任幹事], Section members [専門部員], and the secretaries [幹事] were involved in executing the orders from above and taking care of day-to-day activities.

Still, the Tōhōkai's success in creating a truly mass-based party was mixed. Membership and party chapters increased steadily throughout the second half of 1930s, with membership rising nearly tenfold to peak at 31,625 in 1940, while the number of party chapters increased almost fivefold to 114 in 1941 from 25 in 1936. Tōhōkai youth-affiliated groups also expanded to 25 in 1941 from one in 1938. Only after the party's voluntary dissolution in 1940 did membership and party chapters start declining.<sup>75</sup>

Despite this spectacular growth, the Tōhōkai still fell short of Nakano's professed aim of establishing a popular party strong enough to reform Japan's political and economic establishment. With just 2.2% and 2.9% of total votes in the 1937 and 1942 elections, respectively, the Tōhōkai could hardly be said to be representing the people, or even an important part thereof. With just 12 seats the Diet after 1937 and only seven after 1942, the party's ability to influence political developments was likewise very limited.

Like fascist leaders elsewhere, Nakano could have tried to make up for the party's lack of quantity by substituting operational quality. He could, for instance, have created a hard-line party nucleus that, like the Nazi's SA, would serve as an instrument to influence politics outside legal channels. He opted, however, to concentrate his efforts more on legal political activities such as organizing rallies and issue-driven demonstrations.

### **Nakano and the First Konoe Cabinet**

Given Nakano's disappointment over not having been included in the Konoe cabinet, one might have expected him to be even more critical of the governing party than usual, but his overall attitude wavered between benevolent support and encouraging criticism. After he returned from Europe, Nakano outlined the qualified support he intended to give Konoe: "When it comes

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<sup>75</sup> See Nagai Kazu [永井 和], "The Founding of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立], p.133. Nagai compiled the table using the "Situation of Social Movements" [社会運動の状況] prepared by the Ministry of the Interior's Police Bureau's [内務省警保局]. The reports were prepared every year and the numbers contained show membership levels at the end of the respective calendar years.

to national unity, I would like to support the cabinet, but the mistaken policy of a cabinet needs to be corrected.”<sup>76</sup> Nakano and the Tōhōkai enthusiastically supported Konoe’s hard-line stance vis-à-vis China, voting in favor of the National Mobilization Law Konoe introduced into the 73<sup>rd</sup> Diet in the spring of 1938 and advocating continuously thereafter that Japanese forces occupy more Chinese territory.

When Konoe reshuffled his cabinet in 1938 with the hope of ending the war in China, Nakano welcomed the move and saw the new cabinet members as “in line with our views”<sup>77</sup> (Nakano described the new Army Minister, Itagaki Seishirō, as “courageous without equal.”<sup>78</sup>). He maintained simultaneously, however, that the Tōhōkai would continue “supporting the effort toward national unity...commenting on the various policies, encouraging the government, criticizing it, and reprimanding it without slackening.”<sup>79</sup> Nakano did not, for instance, wholeheartedly support Konoe’s attempts to reach a non-military solution to the conflict on the mainland. Both Konoe’s move to negotiate a settlement through the offices of new Foreign Minister Ugaki and the establishment of a rival Chinese government under Wang Ching-wei came under critical fire from the Tōhōkai. Instead, Nakano backed the pro-escalation army hard liners, cheering them on when they got Japan involved in a border skirmish with the Soviet Union along the Mongolian border in the summer 1938. When the Japanese army one year later got into another border skirmish with Russia at Nomohan and was routed, Nakano likewise found few critical words and instead praised the “gallant display of the Yamato spirit.”<sup>80</sup>

Nakano reserved his encouraging criticism especially for Konoe’s project to reorganize the

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<sup>76</sup> Nakano Seigō “People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany”, p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, July 1938, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1939, p. 2.



people and create a national supra-party that would subsume all other parties. Though Konoe did not realize this ambition during his first tenure, the possibility of a New Party served both as carrot and stick in his relations with the Diet. Nakano was critical of the idea, not because he disagreed with the notion of a single strong party to carry out national reforms. Far from it! Rather, as he said in a speech at the Tōhōkai national convention at the end of 1938, Nakano believed strongly that:

“The people want some great personality to take charge of things. In exchange for their absolute obedience, they want some person of absolute trust such as Hitler or Mussolini to appear. If you take a look at the upper classes of Japan, however, there is no such person. There are limits to how great a single individual can be. Hitler, who leads the Nazis, and Mussolini, who leads the Fascists, are such great personalities. Our present Prime Minister Konoe is a person of uncommon wisdom. He does not, however, have an organization similar to that of the Nazis or the Fascists. He is not, therefore, in contact with the people’s feelings through such an organization. Moreover, he finds himself in a society that is cut off from the general masses...For a politician, not having a political organization means not having any roots in the people. No matter how grand such a person may be, at the end of the day he will never be more than a cut flower in a vase. It is as if you had brought a cut lotus flower and stood it onto your desk (laughter and applause). It has no roots. And since it has no roots it will wither away.”<sup>81</sup>

Nakano’s message was clear: If Konoe wanted to create a new popular party, all he had to do was to call on the Tōhōkai, which had seen its ranks swell just recently, providing Konoe’s administration with the “roots” it needed among the people. Nakano and the Tōhōkai feared nothing more than the prospect that in “re-organizing the people,” Konoe might rely on some branch of the administration rather than on the Tōhōkai. Nakano would later see those fears realized in the form of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. At the end of 1938, only weeks before the Konoe cabinet resigned for failing to bring the war in China to an end, the Tōhōkai issued a declaration severely criticizing the bureaucracies’ mingling in the re-organization of the people:

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<sup>81</sup> Nakano Seigō, during a speech held at the Tōhōkai’s national convention of December 9, 1938 and reprinted in *Tōtairiku*, March 1939 also quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 366-68.

“The so-called proposal for the reorganization of the people...is a sacrilege against the noble readiness of the Japanese people to make sacrifices during this, our national emergency. It has the strong potential of perverting into a vain strengthening of bureaucratic controls, and we strongly oppose it and demand that Prime Minister Konoe earnestly revise his thinking.”<sup>82</sup>

The fear that mobilization for war would only result in more powerful bureaucracies played an increasingly important role in Nakano’s thinking henceforth.

The issue on which Nakano opposed Konoe most vehemently was, however, the Public Management of Electricity Bill [電力国家管理法] introduced by the government into the 73<sup>rd</sup> Diet (December 1937 – March 1938) with the National Mobilization Law. Nakano had attacked the plan to put electric utilities under public control when it was first voiced by the Hirota cabinet’s Communications Minister more than year earlier, on the grounds that its passage would amount to:

“theft similar to taking a water well dug by someone else...We strongly reject the bill, which aims to...become the standard applied in all of Japan’s industries, because within capitalism it represents the worst form of bureaucratic capitalism. It is a disguised form of National Socialism that destroys the entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector and lowers industrial productivity.”<sup>83</sup>

Given Nakano’s usual populist stance, it is surprising that he opposed a bill that would have lowered consumers’ electricity prices. The sad truth is that Nakano was protecting the interest of his financial backers, Yasukawa Daigorō and Matsunaga Yasuzaemon from Fukuoka, who both held important interest in electric utilities. At least in this instance, Nakano was still talking like a traditional party politician, protecting his local backers rather than acting in the

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<sup>82</sup> The Tōhōkai’s resolution against Konoe’s plan to re-organize the people can also be found in Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Tōtairiku*, January 1939, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Clarifying Nakano Seigō’s Believes Concerning Private Ownership and Public Management of the Electric Power Industry” [電力民有国営案に対し中野正剛氏所信を明らかにす], (Tokyo: Electronic League News Agency [電気連合通信社], August 1936), p. 12 and following.

interest of the whole nation.

### **The Failed Merger with the Social Mass Party**

In early 1939, when the first Konoe cabinet was succeeded by the cabinet of Hiranuma Ki'ichirō, Japan's political world was shaken by the news that the Social Mass Party and the Tōhōkai were merging. The idea for the merger came out of a conversation between Nakano and Social Mass Party member Miwa Jusō,<sup>84</sup> a man whom Nakano had known since 1922, when Miwa and Inamura Ryūichi had asked Nakano to hold a speech on non-interference in Russian affairs.<sup>85</sup> Like Nakano, Miwa was of Fukuoka origins; the two men had attended the same Shūyūkan middle school.<sup>86</sup>

Though at first blush the merger differed little from the Tōhōkai's strategy of expanding by incorporating existing organizations, merging with the Social Mass Party (SMP) was a daring plan in terms of both its size and of the ideological gap between the two parties. Being the Diet's third- and fourth-largest parties, respectively, the SMP and the Tōhōkai had in the past been natural competitors.

A merger only became conceivable because the SMP made a major ideological move to the right in 1937-8. When the party was founded with a socialism-tinged platform in July 1932, it opposed imperialist wars. After the outbreak of war with China, however, the SMP came to support the government's war effort; it endorsed, for instance, Konoe's National Mobilization Law in the spring of 1938. Although the party's organ, the *Social Mass News* [社会大衆新聞], claimed this move to the right "was absolutely not a *tenkō* [転向]" and instead referred to it

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<sup>84</sup> Miwa Jusō [三輪寿壮](1894 - 1956), Fukuoka-born lawyer and politician.

<sup>85</sup> Nakano recorded the impressions of this first meeting in *Tōhōjiron*, August 1922.

<sup>86</sup> An account of the conversation is provided in Miwa Jusō [三輪寿壮], "Questions related to the Merger of the Tōhōkai with the Social Mass Party" [東方会と社大党の合同問題], part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 28 - 30.

euphemistically as a “development,” the shift gained momentum in the course of 1938 under party leaders Asō Hisashi<sup>87</sup> and Kamei Kan’ichirō. In the fall of that year, Kamei and two SMP delegates visited Germany and returned to Japan with a rosy picture similar to Nakano’s.<sup>88</sup> During the party convention of November 1938, members decided after a debate to support Konoe’s movement to establish a new party. Many observers skewered the SMP for a spineless conversion, but Nakano’s critique was one of the most sharp-tongued:

“It is said that the Social Mass Party are ready to renounce themselves and establish the New Party. I must say that elegies as pitiful as this declaration are rare in recent times... Whatever their good judgment may be, and irrespective of the fact that they may have a good justification on the surface, their leaders are a shameless bunch of established party politicians. ... If this dream comes true, it will be their spiritual suicide and if it does not work out as they hope, they will be the laughingstock of the whole country.”<sup>89</sup>

While perhaps spineless, the Social Mass Party’s move rightward also cleared the way for a rapprochement with the Tōhōkai. In fact, a number of the SMP’s provincial members and affiliated organizations preemptively left the party after its conversion and joined the Tōhōkai.<sup>90</sup>

Sometime between writing the above article, in mid-1938, and early 1939, Nakano came to appreciate the potential benefits of a merger. The SMP’s 37 MPs (36 after Nishio Suehiro was expelled in 1940) and the Tōhōkai’s 12 would create a party with nearly 50 representatives in the

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<sup>87</sup> Asō Hisashi [麻生久] (1891 – 1940), social activist and politician.

<sup>88</sup> The three SMP delegates to visit Germany were Kamei Kan’ichirō [亀井貫一郎], Itō Ushirō [伊藤卯四郎], and Kondō Takeo [近藤武雄]. The three men expressed their positive views about Nazi-Germany in various works. See Kamei Kan’ichirō “About Hitler’s Labor Policy” [ヒットラーの労働政策に就て], (Tokyo, 1938) or Itō Ushirō, “Concerning the Racial Community of Nazi Germany: The road toward unifying all those working in industry and putting them into the service of the nation” [ナチス独逸民族協同体に就て：全産業人を一体化し、国家奉仕への道は], (Tokyo, 1940).

<sup>89</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, July 1938, p. 9.

<sup>90</sup> Examples include Inamura Ryūichi [稲村隆一] and Nakamura Matashichirō [中村又七郎] from Niigata prefecture, Awatani Yūzō [淡谷悠蔵] from Aomori prefecture, Tanabe Osamu [田辺納] from Osaka and Nagao Tamotsu [長尾有] from Hyōgo prefecture.

Diet - still smaller than the two established parties, but clearly a force to be reckoned with.<sup>91</sup> Once Nakano and Miwa accepted the merger as a possibility, they went a step further and also considered inviting the remainder of Adachi's Kokumin Dōmei and the First Members of Parliament Club [第一議員倶楽部] to join the merged party. These invitations, as well as the decision to create an entirely new "Totalitarian Reform Party" [全体主義革新党] (rather than a coalition of old parties), were the preliminary conclusions reached during secret talks held between representatives of both parties in early 1939.<sup>92</sup> Aiming to heighten the party's public profile and boost its influence, Nakano also hoped to attract well-known individuals such as Ogata Taketora, Tokutomi Sohō, Miyake Setsurei, and Tōyama Mitsuru.<sup>93</sup>

Adachi showed interest in the proposal initially, but ultimately declined due to opposition from the National League's junior members and from within his constituency in Kumamoto. The members of the First Members of Parliament Club also rejected the offer. The SMP was, however, able to convince the Japan Reform Rural Villages Association [日本革新農村協議会] to join.

Talks between the Tōhōkai and the Social Mass Party progressed smoothly and on February 9, 1939, Nakano shook hands with SMP head Abe Isoo, an image that provided symbolic support for the merger. A meeting between high-ranking members of both parties followed, culminating in the issue of a joint declaration according to which both parties would

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<sup>91</sup> According to Miwa Jusō, of the Social Mass Party members involved in the negotiations, the potential of the merger was considerable. Long after the war, he stated: "I am not about to say anything great. But if at the time, the merger had succeeded and if this reformatory force had been formed and had been joint by the National League [under Adachi], then I believe that politics after 1939 would have taken a different direction. It would have been a different political situation if Nakano, Asō [Hisashi], Abe Isoo, a man of character, and then old Adachi Kenzō and Ogata Taketora, would also have participated in the new party." Miwa Jusō [三輪寿壮], "Questions related to the merger of the Tōhōkai with the Social Mass Party" [東方会と社大党の合同問題]; part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 30.

<sup>92</sup> In order to maintain secrecy the talks were held at Miyake Setsurei's residence. The negotiators were Asō Hisashi and Miwa Jusō from the SMP and Yutani Yoshiharu and Sugiura Takeo from the Tōhōkai.

<sup>93</sup> These details are quoted by Miwa Jusō from a note hand-written by Nakano. Miwa Jusō [三輪寿壮], "Questions related to the Merger of the Tōhōkai with the Social Mass Party", p. 28.

“set up preparatory committees with the aim of establishing a single totalitarian people’s party [全体主義単一国民政党] based on a blood pledge of our comrades.”<sup>94</sup> Over the next two weeks, this preliminary committee met several times, debating and sometimes even deciding such issues as the name, platform and policies of the party-to-be.

The Japanese media’s reaction to the planned merger was mostly positive. The *Tokyo Asahi* opined that: “In the present political situation, it is like a breath of fresh air,”<sup>95</sup> while the *Yomiuri* expressed “hope in the interest of rational reforms that this new party is off to a good start.”<sup>96</sup> Only the *Tokyo Daily News* highlighted potential problems:

“When one looks at the history of the Tōhōkai and the Social Mass Party, one becomes aware that most of their members have always been forerunners of the intellectual fashions of our country. When democracy became fashionable, they were its forerunners, and when theories of the proletarians’ class struggle became fashionable, they were again the proletarians’ forerunners. Now that totalitarianism is sweeping through Japan, they turn around 180° and act as the forerunners of totalitarianism. We pay the greatest respect to those who are quick to grasp a political opportunity and the flow of the time, but when someone turns around too quickly, it can be interpreted as a weakness of the foundation of his beliefs...We are waiting with great interest to see what sort of policies a party that professes totalitarianism will offer us.”<sup>97</sup>

### **The Merger’s Failure**

Despite all the declarations and preparations, the merger was called off only a week before it was scheduled to take place. The immediate reason behind this last-minute cancellation was the inability of the two parties’ leaders to decide who would head the new party. The SMP argued that since it held three times as many seats in the Diet as the Tōhōkai, the new party’s head

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<sup>94</sup> The joint declaration is quoted in Inomata p. 410.

<sup>95</sup> *Tokyo Asahi News* [東京朝日新聞] February 10, 1939.

<sup>96</sup> *Yomiuri News* [読売新聞] February 10, 1939.

<sup>97</sup> *Tokyo Daily News* [東京日々新聞] February 10, 1939.

should be Abe Isoo, with Nakano serving as vice-president. Arguing that ideologically the SMP had converted to a position he had advocated for years, Nakano proposed instead that he take the presidential slot, with Abe serving as honorary president and Asō Hisashi as Secretary-General. The SMP offered a compromise solution according to which Abe and Nakano would serve concurrently as presidents, but Nakano also rejected this idea.

As the leadership squabbles delayed a decision, those within the SMP who opposed merging organized their forces and voiced their criticism.<sup>98</sup> Atop the leadership battle, this intra-party conflict – and perhaps also some extra-party temptations<sup>99</sup> – led SMP president Abe Isoo to call off the merger on February 21, 1939. Though those directly involved in the negotiations wished to continue for a short period of time, Nakano – in a characteristic fit of short-temperedness – stopped all negotiations.<sup>100</sup> On February 22, the parties issued a joint declaration stating that they “had decided that the time was not ripe [for a merger] and [that] while maintaining friendly relationships with each other, they would wait for a second opportunity at some future date.”<sup>101</sup>

In the following days, Nakano sent letters to all involved in the failed merger explaining his motives for terminating the negotiations so late in the process. In his letter to Abe Isoo, Nakano described the whole affair as a “crime of haste,” adding that it would be his “last try” at working within the framework of established party politics. “From now on,” he vowed “to take an entirely different route to attain my aims.” He promised that the Tōhōkai would “hold up our

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<sup>98</sup> The Social Mass Party had itself been the creation of a merger between the Social Democratic Party [社会大衆党] and the All Japan Workers and Farmers’ Mass Party [全国労農大衆党]. Opposition to the merger with the Tōhōkai came from members formerly belonging to the Social Democratic Party, that is people such as Nishio Suehiro [西尾末広] and Matsuoka Komakichi [松岡駒吉].

<sup>99</sup> According to some accounts, Nagai Ryūtarō from the Minseitō asked Abe Isoo to postpone or even obstruct the conclusion of the merger. See Kawakami Taketarō ed. [河上丈太郎], “The Biography of Asō Hisashi” [麻生久伝], (Tokyo, 1958), p. 482.

<sup>100</sup> This at least is the explanation given in Asō Hisashi’s biography. See Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata, p. 414.

traditional spirit and walk our thorny path, appeal directly to the feeling of emergency in Japan and strive for the completion of the Imperial Way Totalitarian People's Party [皇道全体主義国民政党].”<sup>102</sup> As so often before, Nakano then left on a trip, this time to China, to distance himself both geographically and mentally from this political disaster.<sup>103</sup>

### **Consequences of the Failed Merger**

And a disaster it was, even if, in retrospect, Ogata called the merger and its failure “all just a bit of excitement caused by the pressures of the times.”<sup>104</sup> Inomata, similarly, played it down as a “tempest in a teapot.”<sup>105</sup> Still, the failure dealt a serious blow to both parties.<sup>106</sup> The SMP's internal divisions deepened in the following months, contributing to the party's breakup in March of 1940 over Saitō Takao's anti-militaristic speech. The effect on the Tōhōkai, however, was probably even more devastating. Many party members criticized Nakano's unyielding stance on the question of who would lead the new party, feeling that the proposals of the larger SMP were quite acceptable as a compromise. Nakano's rash premature termination of the talks – apparently he did not even bother to inform those engaged in the negotiations when he broke them off – combined with his quick flight to China, leaving his followers to clean up the mess, convinced more than a few Tōhōkai members that Nakano did not look after his flock properly.

Trying to calm the troubled waters, Nakano wrote letters to some of his party members

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<sup>102</sup> Letter dated February 25, 1939 from Nakano to Abe Isoo and Asō Hisashi; quoted in Inomata p. 414.

<sup>103</sup> According to Nakano, the alleged purpose of the trip was re-launching peace negotiations with the Nationalist regime under Chiang Kai-shek, an aim that failed completely. Instead of meeting Chiang Kai-shek or any other representative of the Nationalist government, Nakano spoke to Japanese soldiers and in front of Chinese audiences (always fearing to become the victim of a terrorist attack). Nakano's description of the trip can be found in Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, April, 1939, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> Ogata, p. 170.

<sup>105</sup> Inomata calls it literally “a bubble floating on chaos.” Inomata, p. 415.

<sup>106</sup> See Miwa Jusō [三輪寿壮], “Questions related to the merger of the Tōhōkai with the Social Mass Party”, p. 28 – 30.



expressing regret about the mess he had created. He wrote variously that he “took full responsibility” for this “great disaster,” which he said was “born out of my fretfulness alone.” Still, he maintained that his decision to end the merger negotiations “was best for both sides.” Expressing fears that he might “have hurt the pure feelings of my obedient followers,” Nakano asked them “not to give in to [their] anger and just remain calm,” and promised that the Tōhōkai “would be able to make great leaps in the second half of the year.”<sup>107</sup> Still, over the course of the following months, more than half of the Tōhōkai’s 12 MPs left the party. Only Ōishi, Sugiura, Tanaka, and Mitamura remained loyal to Nakano.

Worse was to come. Before departing for China with 20 party members on March 1, 1939, Nakano gave a farewell address in which he declared: “Japanese politics are in a state of paralysis.”<sup>108</sup> This statement, coupled with the fact that Nakano left Japan while the Diet was still in session, led to a parliamentary motion calling for Nakano’s expulsion from the Diet. If Japanese politics were indeed in a state of paralysis, Nakano’s enemies argued, why was he not attending the Diet session to do something about it? As calls for Nakano’s ouster got louder, the speaker of the lower house, Koyama Shōju,<sup>109</sup> felt he could not ignore them. Accordingly, he summoned Nakano back to Tokyo, forcing Nakano to abort his China trip. After meeting with Koyama, Nakano resigned (much to his mother’s regret<sup>110</sup>) on March 27 from the Diet seat he

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<sup>107</sup> Nakano in a letter to Tōhōkai MP Yutani Yoshiharu dated March 23, 1939 quoted in Inomata, p. 416.

<sup>108</sup> Nakano’s complaint that Japanese politics were in a “state of paralysis” had first been voiced at the Tōhōkai’s First National Convention in December 1938 and repeated thereafter. Nakano Seigō, “On the Occasion of the First National Convention” [東方会第一回全国大会に臨みて] in *Tōtairiku*, March 1939, p. 6. Nakano repeated the phrase in “Decide Japan’s Direction!” [日本の動向を決定せよ], speech held June 2, 1939, at the Seinen Kaikan in Tokyo, reprinted in *Tōtairiku*, July 1939, p. 12.

<sup>109</sup> Koyama Shōju [小山松寿] (1876 – 1959), politician, journalist and manager of a news paper. Like Nakano, Koyama had gone to Waseda and worked as a journalist before entering politics eventually joining the Minseitō.

<sup>110</sup> According to Ōishi Masaru, Nakano’s mother, Tora, felt that the expulsion from the Diet was a blemish to the family’s name that could only be atoned for by *harakiri*. Though this may be somewhat of an exaggeration, it is understandable that she should have been unhappy about it. See Ōishi Masaru [大石大], “Eighty Years of Windy Springs and Rainy Autumns – the Autobiography of Ōishi Masaru” [春風秋雨八

had held for 19 years.

In a statement issued that day, Nakano emphasized that he did not “reject parliamentary politics as such” and said it was “necessary that some of my comrades have a seat in the house in order to carry the popular movement into the Diet.” Regarding his own political career, he said:

“the recent failure [i.e. the Tōhōkai’s failure to merge with the SMP ] was the last disappointment with a Diet-centered party...I take all responsibility for it...Having taken stock of the situation, I resign my seat in the Diet and throw myself stark naked among the people.”<sup>111</sup>

Until the next election in the spring of 1942, when Nakano was re-elected, he poured his energy into establishing the Tōhōkai as an extra-parliamentary political force. He was so successful that his biographers refer to the next three years as the Tōhōkai’s heyday. During this time, Nakano traveled across the country giving speeches and organizing rallies, strengthening the party’s local organization and becoming known throughout Japan in the process. Nakano’s endeavors introduced a new form of political organization into Japanese politics, one that relied on a nationwide organization, with new forms of financing and mass mobilization. Even in its heyday, the Tōhōkai was never an exactly accurate reproduction of European fascist parties, but it was certainly inspired by them.

### **Promoting the Triple Alliance**

Thematically, Nakano’s mass agitation activities during the Tōhōkai’s heyday were grouped around three major foreign policy issues, which also defined his relationship - and that of the Tōhōkai -, to the Hiranuma, Abe and Yonai cabinets. The issues were: first, cementing a military alliance with Germany and Italy; second, and closely related, promoting the anti-British

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十年 : 大石大自伝], (Kōchi, 1964), p. 323.

<sup>111</sup> Declaration made by Nakano on March 27, 1939 explaining his resignation from the Diet. Quoted in Inomata p. 418, as well as Ogata, p. 170-72.

movement of 1939-40; and third, advocating the southern advance, more specifically the conquest of French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies in 1940-1.

Since his return from Europe in March 1938, Nakano had argued for an expansion of the Anti-Comintern Pact and contended that “Japan should conclude as speedily as possible a military alliance with Germany and Italy.”<sup>112</sup> While the Anti-Comintern Pact had been directed primarily against the Soviet Union, Nakano wanted the new alliance to be directed primarily against England. On a superficial level, he aimed to contain Britain’s influence in China, which he believed was responsible for the Chinese Nationalist government’s tenacious resistance. On a deeper level, the trip convinced him that Japan, Italy and Germany shared a common interest in revising the international order of which England, France and the US were the main beneficiaries. Finally, establishing closer ties with Germany and Italy would weaken English, French, American, and Russian influence both across Asia generally and in Japan specifically. Nakano hoped to weaken the pro-British and pro-American forces while strengthening the pro-German forces, which included the Tōhōkai and himself. Accordingly, Nakano’s anti-British stance was but the reverse side of his insistence on a military alliance with Germany. As early as mid-1939, he stated: “The Triple Alliance and the Expulsion [of England from Asia] signal the construction of a new order and the destruction of the old: They are the two sides of the same coin.”<sup>113</sup>

Nakano found himself in direct opposition to Prime Minister Hiranuma, who succeeded Konoe in early 1939 and sought an alliance with Germany directed mainly against Russia. Hiranuma’s cabinet was surprised when, after months of negotiating with Germany, it became known that Hitler had concluded a non-aggression pact with Russia in August of 1939. While Hitler’s revelation gave Hiranuma reason enough to resign, Germany’s surprise move did not

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<sup>112</sup> Nakano during a speech held at the Japan Youth Hall on June 2, 1939 “People Movement Comes First Statement” [国民運動第一声明], quoted in Inomata, p. 423.

<sup>113</sup> Nakano Seigō in a speech titled “The Anti-British Movement and the Triple Alliance” [反英運動と三国軍事同盟], held Hibiya Public Hall, Tokyo, July 31, 1939 and reprinted in “East Asian People’s Convention” [東亜民族大会], in *Tōtairiku*, September 1939, p. 115.

alter Nakano's position, as he had advocated that the alliance be directed against England all along. Nakano praised Hitler's decision as a strategy that freed Germany to move against Poland, France and England, and recommended that Japan similarly conclude a non-aggression pact with Russia to the north in order to be able to move south against the colonies of England, France and the Netherlands.<sup>114</sup> Nakano's assessment was not, however, shared by Japan's subsequent governments. Shocked by Hitler's turnaround, neither the Abe nor the Yonai cabinets considered continuing negotiations with Germany on an expanded military alliance. Unwilling to give up, Nakano continued clamoring for closer ties with Germany, in part by mobilizing anti-British feeling within the population.

### **The Movement against England**

Anti-colonial, and hence anti-British, strands had been present in Japan since the *bakumatsu* period and later came to form an important element of Pan-Asian thinking. England's continuing military support for the Chinese Nationalist regime in the years after 1937 had revived latent anti-British resentments, leading in the years 1939-40 to an Anti-English Movement [排英運動・反英運動] in which the Tōhōkai - thanks to its nationwide structure - played a leading role.<sup>115</sup> The party's activities took the form of demonstrations (often in front of the British Embassy, where angry crowds gathered and sometimes threw stones into the embassy's compound), speech rallies and much-publicized meetings between Nakano and the English ambassador.

The Tōhōkai often used international incidents as rallying points for popular indignation, which it then directed against Anglophiles and England's representatives in Japan. Thus, in April

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<sup>114</sup> See Nakano Seigō, "The Unmovable Great Policy of Greater Japan" [大日本不動の大方針], in *Tōtairiku*, October 1939, throughout but especially p. 4-9.

<sup>115</sup> Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 424.

1939, the authorities of the English settlement in Tientsin refused to extradite an assassin who had killed a pro-Japanese Chinese citizen. In response, the Japanese army sealed off the English settlement. While Foreign Minister Arita held talks with the English ambassador to resolve what came to be called the Tientsin Incident (these talks eventually produced a compromise according to which the English would not interfere with Japan's military operations in China), the Tōhōkai organized a "Convention of the East Asian People to Destroy England" [撃英東亜民族大会] at Hibiya Public Hall in late July. Attended by Pan-Asianists from across Asia, including Indian activist Rash Bihari Bose and representatives of independence movements from the Philippines, Indonesia and the Muslim world, this forum gave Nakano a stage from which to demand: "England should withdraw entirely from China! England should withdraw entirely from East Asia!"<sup>116</sup>

Then, on January 21, 1940, a British destroyer stopped and searched the Asama-maru, a Japanese passenger ship 35 miles off the Japanese coast, arresting 21 German citizens on board. The Japanese public was outraged at this breach of international law and Nakano quickly exploited the chance to hurl another barb at England. On January 22, the Tōhōkai declared:

"This must be called the greatest insult to Japan, a blasphemy against the Japanese spirit. This, finally, is the national disgrace that our government has invited by its flattering attitude toward England and America, yet it is not something the Japanese spirit will forgive."<sup>117</sup>

On January 23, Nakano visited Prime Minister Yonai and Foreign Minister Arita, demanding not only that the right of belligerency be applied to all English ships traveling to or from nationalist-controlled China but also that the captain of the Asama-maru be punished. On

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<sup>116</sup> Nakano Seigō in a speech titled "The Anti-British Movement and the Triple Alliance" [反英運動と三国軍事同盟], held Hibiya Public Hall, Tokyo, July 31, 1939 and reprinted in "East Asian People's Convention" [東亜民族大会], in *Tōtairiku*, September 1939, p. 113.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Inomata p. 426.

January 25, Nakano visited the British ambassador and filed a note of protest. To underline his visit's importance, Nakano mobilized more than three hundred followers to demonstrate in front of the embassy compound.

With time and practice, the Tōhōkai's capacity for mobilizing its party members increased steadily, though the Party offered no compensation for demonstrators and members often had to travel to Tokyo from the neighboring provinces.<sup>118</sup> The Tōhōkai's ability to harness Pan-Asian and anti-British sentiment contributed greatly to its growth and overall strength.<sup>119</sup>

### **Nakano's Southern Advance**

The third theme with which Nakano sought to mobilize Japan's masses was his version of the southern advance, directed mainly against the European Powers' possessions in Asia. The defeat of the Japanese forces at the hands of the Red Army at Nomohan had shown that moving north, against Russia, was ill-advised. The southern advance, meanwhile, seemed more inviting than ever before, given developments in Europe. After overrunning Poland in the fall of 1939, Germany occupied Denmark and Norway in early 1940, followed by Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg in May. France surrendered on June 7, and though England held out, its days seemed numbered. In the eyes of many Japanese, the European Allies' weakness made European colonies in Asia ripe for the picking.

As early as April 15, 1940 (long before the fall of France), the Yonai government had declared that it would not exploit the war in Europe to expand Japanese influence in Asia. Nakano saw this declaration as weak-kneed submission to the imperial Powers for the sake of maintaining an outdated and decaying international order. In May 1940, he demanded that "the Japanese government prepare to occupy the Dutch East Indies for their security and then wait for

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<sup>118</sup> See Inomata p. 426.

<sup>119</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2. p. 414-15.

a good opportunity to do so.” In the meantime, “Japan should secure the right for preferential use of the Dutch East Indies”<sup>120</sup> to thwart any English or American ambitions in that direction.

Two months later, after fall of France, the Tōhōkai demanded that Japan occupy not only the Dutch East Indies, but also French Indochina, again for its own security [保証占領・保障占領]. Speaking publicly in July, Nakano said: “We should take French Indochina! We should take the Dutch East Indies! Not taking them is not an option!”<sup>121</sup> In what was to become a familiar refrain, Nakano reassured his audience that Japanese aggression against Europe’s colonies would go unchecked:

“England has both its hands full preparing to fight against Germany, which is lurching across the English Channel. If the English are defeated, they will have to flee their home country and go all the way to Canada. How can they interfere in East Asian affairs? England has no power to resist and the Netherlands have been annihilated. Will America come? America won’t come.”<sup>122</sup>

Even if the U.S. decided to take up arms in defense of Europe, Nakano posited, Japan benefited from a natural shield in the form of a chain of islands in the South Pacific, which were “unsinkable aircraft carriers” forming a Japanese “Siegfried line.”<sup>123</sup> America, he concluded, “cannot stand up to Japan.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Tōtairiku*, May 1940, p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Seigō at a speech rally in the Japan Youth Hall on July 2, 1940 reproduced in Kōen [講演], vol. 476, under the title “Global Change and the Future Path of Japan” [政界の大変局と日本の進路], quoted in Inomata, p. 427-28 as well as in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 452.

<sup>122</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata p. 427–28.

<sup>123</sup> The “Siegfried line” was a chain of German defense fortifications on its western border to France. Like its counterpart, the Maginot line, which protected the eastern border of France and which had proven absolutely useless in 1940 because the German armies had circumvented it by storming through the Netherlands, the Siegfried Line too, was to be rather ineffective in protecting Germany when the Allied Armies entered Germany in 1945. Very much the same can be said about that chain formed of unsinkable aircraft carriers mentioned by Nakano.

<sup>124</sup> Nakano Seigō at a speech rally in the Japan Youth Hall on July 2, 1940 reproduced in Kōen [講演], vol. 476, under the title “Global change and the future path of Japan” [政界の大変局と日本の進路]; quoted in

Some of Nakano's hopes were finally fulfilled when the second Konoe cabinet (July 1940 – July 1941) replaced the Yonai administration. At the end of September, Japan concluded the Triple Alliance with Germany and Italy, and in April of the following year, Foreign Minister Matsuoka signed a Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union, freeing Japan to move south. At a rally in early October attended by the Italian and German ambassadors, Nakano argued that since French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies had become “lost articles with great value but no owner [無主遺失物],”<sup>125</sup> taking them was not a conquest but an act of liberation. Moreover:

“Once we control the resources of the South Pacific, it will be of no concern to us even if America threatens to stop giving us petroleum. Will they finally exert economic pressure? If so, let's see what they do if we in turn deny them deliveries of tin and rubber.”<sup>126</sup>

Nakano's strategic calculus implied that Japan needed to move quickly, for the more time elapsed, the stronger the US would be and the less time Japan would have to develop the newly acquired territories and integrate them into the Japanese economy. In his speeches, Nakano accordingly urged Konoe not to worry about American opposition but to “aggressively engage in action.”<sup>127</sup> In an editorial in late 1940, he declared: “Japan's decisive battle lies to the south (applause). The task ahead of Japan is to grasp the Dutch East Indies.”<sup>128</sup>

As time passed and Konoe remained inactive, Nakano's pronouncements shifted from positive exhortations to act quickly to negative misgivings that it might be too late: “Japan missed

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Inomata, p. 427-428 as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 452.

<sup>125</sup> Nakano Seigō in his speech titled “Unleash the Power of the Triple Alliance” [三国同盟の勢力発場演説会] held during a Tōhōkai-sponsored-speech rally at Hibiya Public Hall on October 10, 1940, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 484.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Nakano Seigō in *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō* [東洋経済新報], October 5, 1940.

<sup>128</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, November, 1940, p. 6-7.



its first chance in May and June of last year. We missed our second chance immediately after the conclusion of the Triple Alliance. Through the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union, we are now given a third chance.” And while Japan’s leaders hesitated, thinking: “Is this our chance? Is this our chance?” Nakano was sure that “opportunity has visited Japan three times and three times it will leave” unless Japan was ready to exploit it. On the same occasion, Nakano pointed out that if Japan had taken Indonesia in 1940 (as Nakano had argued then), it would have secured oil supplies by 1941.<sup>129</sup>

Neither Germany’s unexpected invasion of Russia in June 1941 nor the Atlantic Charter declared by Roosevelt and Churchill in the same summer changed Nakano’s position in any fundamental way. Two days after Germany’s attack on Russia, Nakano maintained that: “The Triple Alliance should serve as the basis of Japan’s foreign policy with regard to all difficult situations.” He added that the war’s escalation in Europe should be matched by a similar escalation in East Asia, for “the Chinese war will not be decided in China. The only way to solve the China Incident is to transition the Sino-Japanese war into a war of liberation of East Asia.”<sup>130</sup> Nakano’s reasoning was that by directly attacking the Western colonial Powers, Japan would cast itself as an Asian liberator, thus appealing to Pan-Asian and nationalist feelings.<sup>131</sup> For similar reasons, Nakano argued repeatedly for the abolition of the foreign concessions in Chinese territory.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano’s speech “Popular Movement to Overcome the Crisis” [難局突破国民運動] held at the Grand National Convention of May 1, 1941, reproduced in Nakano Seigō, “Tackling the Break Through of the National Crisis” [国難打開の体当たり], in *Tōtairiku*, June, 1941, p. 29.

<sup>130</sup> Declaration issued by Nakano on June 23, 1941 while touring Hokkaidō, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 533-34.

<sup>131</sup> Thus in a speech held at the Tōhōkai’s Grand National Convention of May 1, 1941, Nakano had argued that the “Chinese problem will not be solved in China. If we wish to solve the China problem, .... we have to change the character of the Sino-Japanese war, and transform it into a Holy War to liberate East Asia. The solution of the Chinese problem lies in the liberation of East Asia.” Nakano Seigō, “Tackling the Break Through of the National Crisis” [国難打開の体当たり], in *Tōtairiku*, June, 1941, p. 32.

<sup>132</sup> The abolition of the foreign concessions in China was a recurrent element in Nakano’s rhetoric in the

Nakano saw the Atlantic Charter issued by England and America in mid-August as a warning directed against Japan's possible southern advance. He felt obliged to retort, which he did in a very popular September 17 speech entitled "In Reply to Roosevelt and Churchill."<sup>133</sup> Nakano attacked England and America for their hypocrisy in denouncing Germany and Japan's wars of conquest, given that imperial expansion had built the British and American own empires. Likening Japan to a lamb and England to lion, Nakano argued that the Anglo-Saxon Powers:

"all say with one voice that countries can be divided into peace-loving nations and bellicose-aggressive nations. They say that the former are good and the latter are bad. They claim that rewarding good and punishing evil is the task of England and America. I cannot help being shocked at the crudeness of this argument. Gentlemen! Even a ferocious lion, after he has killed and eaten a piece of cattle, will rest peacefully for a couple of days. And even a peaceful lamb, during winter when food is scarce, will eat the bark of pine trees. According to their silly line of argument, which does not see beyond the present, the lion is peace-loving and the lamb is aggressive (applause)."<sup>134</sup>

Maintaining his longtime position that the international order was fundamentally unfair, Nakano argued that Germany, and Italy and Japan had every right to fight the arrangement because "heaven certainly has not put a superior people on the face of the earth in order to starve them to death (applause)."<sup>135</sup> Comparing Japan to a "mouse that, when driven into the corner by the cat, will bite,"<sup>136</sup> Nakano concluded that Japan's main problem was a lack of resolute leadership in a situation in which time was of the essence. Expressing fears that "our efforts won't be in time," Nakano wondered: "Is there not just one man within the cabinet who will show

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years 1939-41. See for example, Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, June 1939, 6 and following.

<sup>133</sup> The speech was reprinted in a pamphlet which went through over one hundred reprints. Nakano Seigō, "In reply to Churchill and Roosevelt – Addressing the Japanese people" [ルーズヴェルト・チャーチルに答え、日本国民に告ぐ], in *Tōtairiku*, October 1941, p. 2-9.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 3

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Nakano quoted (from Ibid.) in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 558.

as much will as Clemenceau, please?”<sup>137</sup> He repeated his demand to strike south until the very eve of the Pearl Harbor attack. As late as December 2, 1941, Nakano said in a speech:

“The Tōjō cabinet is about to make a decision. I hope that they will make that decision. If they don’t make it, we might have to watch the destruction of Japan passively. This crisis does not allow us to watch on silently, for the enemy has already entered our kitchen. Gentlemen, it’s time to stand up, isn’t it?”<sup>138</sup>

Another rally with the same theme had been already planned for December 17, when, on the morning of December 8, Nakano was surprised by the news Pearl Harbor attack.

### **The Tōhōkai’s Heyday**

These various activities, especially the anti-England movement and the mass demonstrations and speech tours, helped not only to expand party membership, but also to cement intra-party ties, enhance the party’s public profile and raise funds. Taking stock of his activities in January of 1940, Nakano wrote:

“A year has passed in which usually once a week I would go to the countryside to hold a speech rally and then return to Tokyo. I have been in politics for roughly twenty years, but I have never experienced anything like the present, where the crowds in the provinces gather to listen to my speeches, then set up a preparatory meeting, then set up a party branch and thus expand our organization. [They take such actions] because the state of the world is pressuring them to do so...During one year of touring the country and holding speeches in the provinces, the Tōhōkai and its members have achieved great results. We have doubled if not tripled our party’s influence and intend to continue along the same lines this year.”<sup>139</sup>

Nakano’s health suffered from his frenetic pace - speeches were particularly taxing, and in

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<sup>137</sup> Nakano quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 560.

<sup>138</sup> Nakano Seigō, “We Cannot Afford to Watch the Crisis Sitting on the Fence” [危機座視するを許さず] speech held December 2, 1941, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 583.

<sup>139</sup> Nakano quoted in *Tōhō Seikei Tsūshin* [東方政経通信], January 1, 1940

the summer of 1940 he underwent throat surgery<sup>140</sup> - but he believed the membership surge made it well worth the trouble.

The Tōhōkai's popularity climaxed with the “Popular Movement to Break Out of the Crisis” [難局突破国民運動] of spring 1941. Relations with the U.S. were deteriorating: In October 1940, the US imposed an embargo on the export of scrap metal to Japan, while in August of 1941, following Japan's occupation of southern French Indochina in July, the US stopped all oil deliveries to Japan. Against that backdrop, the “Popular Movement to Break Out of the Crisis” brought together familiar themes, including the southern advance and anti-British feelings. Its only innovation was an increased emphasis on anti-American rhetoric. Remarkably, however, the newly-packaged themes resonated strongly with the Japanese people.

The movement's initial kick-off meeting at the Japan Youth Hall on March 25 was followed by rallies on March 26, 27 and 30 that led to the Grand National Convention held on May 1 at the Ryōgoku Sports Arena in eastern Tokyo. Attendance at this event was of an unprecedented magnitude, certainly for the Tōhōkai but likely also for any other Japanese pre-war party.<sup>141</sup> The party's bulletin put the number of attendees at 180,000, which may be a bit of an exaggeration.<sup>142</sup> The *Dōmei-Shashin-Tokuhō* may have been closer to the truth with its report that:

“more than 100,000 attendees inundated the convention. Even before the official start of the meeting, the hall had exceeded its capacity, with the crowds that wished to enter but were unable to do so filling the streets and shouting and creating a stampede outside. This was the largest crowd the sports arena has seen since its construction.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 530.

<sup>141</sup> As elsewhere May 1, had traditionally been May Day in Japan. However in 1936 it was prohibited and replaced by the “Asian Prosperity and Public Service Day” [興亜奉公日].

<sup>142</sup> *Tōhō Jihō* [東方時報] later changed to *Tōhō-Seikei-Tsūshin* [東方政経通信], issue of May 15, 1941.

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Inomata p. 447.

While most of Japan's big mainstream papers did not cover the event, the *Kokumin Shimbun* ran an article on its society page. Under the headline "Unseasonable Crowd: Strange Events in our Streets on Public Service Day," the report read:

"On the afternoon of May 1, Public Service Day, an unseasonable line of people creating a traffic jam could be seen around the Ryōgoku Sports Arena. These crowds wanted to attend the 'Break Out of the Crisis Convention'....One line went all the way to the Shiohara bridge in Ryōgoku San-Chōme, while another line circled the Ryōgoku Sports Arena and ended at the Ryōgoku bridge that crosses the Sumida river...Beneath large banners raised on a scaffold that announced that Nakano Seigō would hold a speech rally, there were old men, youngsters, students, and even women shouting heave-ho, heave-ho and trying to enter the arena...At 6:30 p.m., the arena was packed to capacity; the shops interrupted temporarily their businesses."<sup>144</sup>

Some 3,000 Tōhōkai youth in party uniforms worked with the police all day to ensure the event passed without incident. They were largely successful.<sup>145</sup>

When Nakano spoke again in September at Hibiya Hall criticizing the Atlantic Charter, the crowds were much smaller, but media coverage was better. While the three major dailies - the *Tokyo Asahi*, *Tokyo Daily News* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* - mentioned Nakano's speech only briefly, the *Miyako Shimbun*, *Chūgai Shimbun*, *Kokumin Shimbun*, and the *Teito Nichi-Nichi* reproduced the speech in great detail. Even the English-language *Shanghai Press* mentioned the event, calling Nakano "president of the fascist Tōhōkai" and reporting that "this speech rally was similar to the speech rallies in Hitler's early period. Nakano's followers attending the speech wore black shirts and trousers, military gaiters and caps, as well as red neckties and swastika armbands."<sup>146</sup> If the crowds and the media coverage are any indication, Nakano and the Tōhōkai had succeeded in raising their public profile through their mass activities.

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<sup>144</sup> *Kokumin Shimbun*, May 2, 1941 (quoted in Inomata)

<sup>145</sup> Only one of the wooden admission gates to the arena was destroyed by crowds trying to push their way into the packed hall.

<sup>146</sup> *China Press* quoted in Inomata, p. 454.

These activities also opened up new avenues for party funding. Like other Japanese parties, the Tōhōkai had traditionally relied primarily on funding from the business world.<sup>147</sup> Nakano, for example, counted among his Fukuoka financial supporters Yasukawa Daigorō, who had large interests in the electronic and coal industry, and Matsunaga Yasuzaemon, formerly Nakano's political rival who had subsequently founded a successful electric utility company. Once Takagi Rikurō established contact with the Mitsui Zaibatsu, Nakano also received continued support from that side, channeled through Fujise Masajirō and Takuma Dan and, after the latter's assassination, through Ikeda Seihin.<sup>148</sup> Nakano also received support from Yamashita Kamesaburō,<sup>149</sup> founder of Yamashita Shipping, and the spinning industry tycoon Tsuda Shingo,<sup>150</sup> who also became a friend of Nakano's.<sup>151</sup>

As the party expanded its membership to the Japanese middle class and below,<sup>152</sup> however, its leaders became aware of a potential new funding source. They began charging membership fees and admission fees (officially declared as cleaning-up cost) for rallies, usually 30 *sen* per person. Revenue also came from the sales of books, magazines and pamphlets. While this income never made the party independent of contributions from the business world, as Nakano might have hoped, it became an important second leg on which party finances stood and further increased the Tōhōkai's claim to be representing the people.

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<sup>147</sup> How Nakano went about raising financial funds is described briefly in Komai Tokuzō [駒井徳三], "A look behind the scenes of political fund raising" [政治資金の楽屋裏], part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 18-21.

<sup>148</sup> Ikeda Seihin a.k.a. Ikeda Shigeaki [池田成彬] (1867 - 1950), businessman and politician.

<sup>149</sup> Yamashita Kamesaburō [山下亀三郎] (1867–1944), businessman, founder of the Yamashita Zaibatsu and financial backer of Nakano.

<sup>150</sup> Tsuda Shingo [津田信吾] (1881–1948), businessman with interest in textile manufacturing and financial supporter of Nakano's.

<sup>151</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 498-99.

<sup>152</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 426.

### **Domestic Politics: The Hiranuma, Abe and Yonai Cabinets**

Though the Tōhōkai's mass-movement activities revolved mainly around foreign policy issues, Nakano and Tōhōkai had not abandoned their domestic agenda. Foreign policy issues featured more prominently in the public eye because they proved to be a far superior instrument for mass mobilization and because Nakano hoped to use war and mobilization as leverage for his preferred domestic reforms. These domestic and foreign policy aims dictated Nakano's attitude toward, and the Tōhōkai's relationship with, the Hiranuma, Abe and Yonai cabinets.

Hiranuma's succession of Konoe as Prime Minister in early 1939 was a triumph for Japan's conservatives and a setback for reformers, including Nakano. Not only was Hiranuma a career bureaucrat who staffed his cabinet with other bureaucrats, he also was known to oppose expanding the Anti-Comintern Pact into anything other than an alliance against communism. He also resisted domestic reforms along either socialist or fascist lines.

While Nakano had taken a relatively benevolent stance toward Konoe, he showered Hiranuma with typical biting criticism. Nakano attacked Hiranuma for his unwillingness to expand the Anti-Comintern Pact into a military alliance directed against England<sup>153</sup> as well as his lack of initiative at a time when "the soldiers at the front are lifting their heads and looking toward their country for political leadership, only to be disappointed by its absence. They all complain about this and say: 'Just come to a decision concerning our policy.'"<sup>154</sup> Continuing a theme he had developed under Konoe, Nakano distinguished between politics [政治] and administration [行政],<sup>155</sup> deploring that "Japan's politics in the midst of this emergency are

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<sup>153</sup> See Nakano Seigō, speech held June 2, 1939 at Seinen Kaikan, reprinted in "Decide Japan's Direction" [日本の動向を決定せよ], in *Tōtairiku*, July 1939, p. 34.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Nakano Seigō in a speech held December 9, 1938 at the Tōhōkai's national convention, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 366.

bureaucratic politics devoid of any spiritual leadership of the people.”<sup>156</sup> Nakano also dismissed any hope that Hiranuma would carry out domestic reforms, stating in a speech held in June 1939 in Tokyo:

“A cabinet that simply clings to power that is handed down from above cannot carry out truly strong politics (applause). The only ones who will cooperate with such a cabinet are the bureaucrats. They work for a monthly stipend and are passive, are they not? They don’t work on their own initiative...How can the Hiranuma cabinet possibly carry out reformist policies?”<sup>157</sup>

Like Konoe before him, Hiranuma was a cut flower without roots, the only difference being that “the lotus flower has been exchanged with the flower of a plum tree (laughter and applause). Yet, in an emergency, even a plum flower won’t do.”<sup>158</sup>

Nakano’s criticism of the subsequent Abe (August 30, 1939 to January 16, 1940) and Yonai (January 16 to July 22, 1940) cabinets followed similar lines. He deplored both cabinets’ lack of political initiative with respect to domestic reforms and to expanding cooperation with Germany and Italy, as well as their servile attitudes toward England and America. Nakano attributed both cabinets’ failings to his belief that neither Abe and nor Yonai were rooted in the people of Japan, and that both accordingly relied on bureaucratic powers rather than political leadership.<sup>159</sup> He thus welcomed Konoe’s second cabinet in the summer of 1940 as a revival of the reformist cause.

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<sup>156</sup> Nakano Seigō, speech held June 2, 1939 at Seinen Kaikan, reprinted in “Decide Japan’s Direction” [日本の動向を決定せよ], *Tōtairiku*, July 1939, p. 34

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33-34.

<sup>158</sup> Nakano Seigō in his December 9, 1939 speech at the first national convention, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 368.

<sup>159</sup> For Nakano’s criticism of Yonai see Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Tōtairiku*, February and March 1940.



### The Second and Third Konoe Cabinets and Domestic Reforms

After its formation, the second Konoe cabinet realized many of the foreign policy aims that Nakano had promoted for years, such as concluding the Triple Alliance in the fall of 1940 and signing a non-aggression pact with Russia the following spring. Nakano's hope that Konoe would also move south and take the Dutch East Indies to secure Japan's oil supply, however, was thwarted. Konoe's second cabinet proved to be similarly disappointing with respect to domestic reforms.

On July 6, several weeks before becoming Prime Minister, Konoe made his famous New Order Declaration [新体制声明], the principal political aim of which was the strengthening of the Prime Minister's powers to carry out domestic reforms and revisionist foreign policies. As Konoe called on Japan's political parties to aid him in the establishment of a new supra-national party, Nakano - doubtless driven by the hope of realizing his long-cherished dream of a popular mass party - sought to put the Tōhōkai at the helm of the movement. The day after Konoe's announcement, Nakano sent Konoe a letter saying that the PM-elect should not allow the remnants of the established parties to ruin everything and as such should invite only Adachi Kenzō, Suetsugu Nobumasa,<sup>160</sup> Hashimoto Kingorō,<sup>161</sup> and himself to form the new party. All other parties, Nakano predicted, would follow.

Konoe did not heed Nakano's advice entirely. The Prime Minister selected Nakano to sit on the new party's preparatory committee, but the group's members numbered 26. Nakano - together with Hashimoto from the Greater Japan Youth Party [大日本青年党], Suetsugu, president of the East Asian Construction League [東亜建設連盟], and Kuzū Yoshihisa,<sup>162</sup> president of the

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<sup>160</sup> Suetsugu Nobumasa [末次信正] (1880 – 1944), Navy Admiral.

<sup>161</sup> Hashimoto Kingorō [橋本欣五郎] (1890 - 1957), Fukuoka-born right-wing army officer and politician, who was involved in various *coup d'états* in the early 1930s.

<sup>162</sup> Kuzū Yoshihisa [葛生能久] (1874 – 1958), nationalist and politician who after the death of Uchida Ryōhei in 1937 had taken over the presidency of the Kokuryūkai.

Kokuryūkai - formed the committee's right-wing faction. When the new party was realized in the form of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA), Nakano became one of its regular members, marking an important win for his domestic policy agenda. As Japan's political parties rushed to dissolve and join Konoe's party,<sup>163</sup> the Tōhōkai led them:

“When you think about it using common sense, one cannot ride two horses at the same time. We cannot participate in a unifying movement that aims to overcome factions and divisions, especially not as a part at the very center of that movement, while on the other hand continuing to act as a political association called Tōhōkai.”<sup>164</sup>

Accordingly, the Tōhōkai - which from 1936 to 1940 had existed as a political association [政治結社] - was officially dissolved and in its place a cultural organization [文化団体] called Shintō-sha [振東社], or Eastern Awakening Society, was established.<sup>165</sup> The switch from political to cultural society took place more in name, however, than in substance. The Tōhōkai's offices in Akasaka were maintained and the cultural society continued many of the activities previously carried out by the party, such as publishing, sponsoring research, holding lectures, organizing rallies and symposiums, etc. The policies advocated in the society's publications and during speech rallies were also identical to the party's. Personnel continuity at the Tōhōkai's core was also unbroken, as most of the former party staff and leading figures were in the Shintō-sha's ranks. The only major break, in fact, was a decline in membership - a trend that continued

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<sup>163</sup> The Social Mass Party dissolved on July 6, followed by the Kuhara faction of the Seiyūkai on July 16, the Minseitō's Nagai Ryūtarō faction on the 25<sup>th</sup>, Adachi's National League on the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Seiyūkai's Nakajima faction on the 30<sup>th</sup>, and finally on August 15, the remainder of the Minseitō.

<sup>164</sup> Nakano in a speech held at the Tōhōkai Convention on October 22, 1940, quoted in Inomata, p. 430.

<sup>165</sup> About the selection of this name, Nakano wrote: “These days people mostly use ‘Kōtō’ [興東] to express the idea of arousal or awakening of the East, but I feel that the character Shin [振] is more positive and more classic as a letter.” (Nakano Seigō, quoted in Inomata, p. 431). Nakano was probably also influenced by the Shintō Gakusha [振東学社] founded by Nakano's paragon Kaneko Sessai on the Asian mainland.

thereafter.<sup>166</sup>

Nakano's priorities as a member of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) remained much the same as they had been when he ran the Tōhōkai. He continued advocating the southern advance, for instance. With respect to domestic politics, he became most passionately involved in two debates, both of which were related to the fundamental question of whether mobilization would be imposed from above by Japan's bureaucracies or arise from below through the kind of mass movement to which Nakano aspired. On a fundamental level, this question dictated the debate over the nature of the IRAA that grew out of Konoe's New Order Movement. On a more practical level, it informed the nature of the economic controls imposed by the Japanese state to harness the nation's resources for war.

The struggle over the IRAA's nature came to a head over the question of whether the party's prefectural heads would be appointed by the central bureaucracies, for example by the Ministry of the Interior, or elected from within the provinces. The bureaucrats within the IRAA believed the former option would expand their influence. Nakano, never a friend of expanding bureaucratic power, believed that:

“The whole direction of the IRAA will be determined by the question of whether or not governors will be appointed to the provincial chapters, and thus I have done everything within reason to oppose this [bureaucratic appointment].”<sup>167</sup>

Nakano continued:

“The IRAA exists to cooperate with the government. Cooperation means lending one's strength [to others], but not obeying them. What would happen if, by failing to understand this, the central members [of the IRAA] were to become sycophants, to become the spies of the central government; the local heads were to become governors; and the provincial patriots were to take on the airs of bureaucrats, serving as the hands

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<sup>166</sup> See Arima Manabu [有馬学], *The Organization and Policies of the Tōhōkai*, p. 69.

<sup>167</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1941, p. 3.

and legs of the governors? Right now, politics have vanished from Japan and thus only the bureaucrats are working. If the recently-established IRAA were to become a robot [i.e. a puppet] of the bureaucrats, and were used only for their sake, it would cause the already steaming-hot passion of the people to burst into flames, or entrap the entire people within a [bureaucratic] framework. If you think that in order to bring peace to the realm, it is sufficient to entrap the people, to shut them up, suppress them, drive them into poverty, and force them to endure [their fate], you are greatly mistaken. All it will do is to habituate them to the declining fortune of a ruined nation. Without exalting the passions of the people and fostering a voluntary spirit, even if it looks fine on the outside, the Japanese spirit will perish and Japan will be beset by troubles brought from abroad.”<sup>168</sup>

While the battle between bureaucrats and reformers raged within the IRAA, Nakano continued traveling throughout Japan, giving speeches advocating the southern advance and attacking the bureaucrats. Despite his efforts, however, the IRAA's provincial branch organizations ultimately came under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. This structural decision, more than anything else, caused Nakano's alienation from the IRAA.

As this battle about the IRAA's fundamental structure continued, a more practical party debate centered around the Konoe cabinet's announcement on August 1, 1940, shortly after its inception, of “a planned economy based on cooperation between the people and the government.” As the Planning Board bureaucrats prepared their proposal, Nakano submitted his counterproposal to the permanent executive council of the IRAA in the late fall of 1940. His “Basic Outline for Economic Reforms” attacked fervently the bureaucrats' ideas as “empty and shallow idealism” or “left-wing totalitarianism in the guise of Imperial-way totalitarianism.”<sup>169</sup> Nakano declared that while the bureaucrats' intention was to base economic activity on the principle of “self-annihilation for the sake of the nation” [滅私奉公], his conception of a functioning economy was based on human nature – in other words, on the individual's search for profit.

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<sup>168</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The Triple Alliance and Trends in Japan” [日独伊三国同盟と日本の動向], quoted in Inomata p. 432.

<sup>169</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Basic Outline for Economic Reforms” [経済革新基本要領] in *Far Eastern Economist* [東洋経済新報], October – November, 1940.

“A controlled economy must necessarily move to a planned economy. Within the radius of this planned economy, economic principles will continue to work. The basis of these economic principles has to be human nature. Any claims from the bureaucracies that ignore this human nature are essentially empty and hypocritical in their motives.”<sup>170</sup>

Ironically, Nakano, who had advocated economic controls since 1930, came to oppose them when they were introduced by Japan’s bureaucracies. As with Nakano’s opposition to the idea of putting the electric utility industry under public control in 1936-7, this turnaround was motivated as much by intellectual integrity and antagonism toward Japan’s bureaucrats as by the need to defend the economic interests of his financial backers.<sup>171</sup> Despite his timely efforts, the Planning Board’s proposal eventually passed on December 7, 1940, further alienating Nakano from the IRAA.

### **Leaving the IRAA**

In early 1941, while Nakano was busy fighting for the IRAA in the provinces, its constitutionality was questioned openly by former established party members in the Diet. In response to the Diet men’s accusation that the IRAA ran counter to the Constitution, both Prime Minister Konoe and Home Minister Hiranuma Ki’ichirō said the IRAA was not a political [政治結社], but merely a public, association [公事結社]. At the same time, the government reduced

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<sup>170</sup> Nakano Seigō, *Tōtairiku* [東大陸], December 1940.

<sup>171</sup> Nakano’s financial backers duly expressed their gratitude. When he met with some representatives of the Kansai business community in Osaka, the Director of the Osaka Machinery Manufacturing, Hamazaki Terumichi [浜崎照道], praised Nakano saying: “When Mr. Nakano published the permanent executive council’s proposal concerning the new economic system, the members of business community expressed their strong agreement. The reason why the proposal was so well received is that its argument is simple and clear, moreover realistic, and does not contain any worrying parts that would destroy the present structures. The fact that even Mr. Nakano says things like this has calmed my worries. Nakano is often called a fascist and mistakenly believed to be someone who does not care about the realities of economic life, but only about the applause that comes from the audience in the gallery. I myself have felt so until now. The fact that this same Mr. Nakano says things like that .... created peace of mind among the Osaka business community and stock holders and they no longer feel any need to worry.” quoted in Inomata p. 436.

the IRAA's budget from 37 million to 8 million Yen. This was followed in February 1941, by a government's promise to the Diet that the IRAA would be reorganized.

For Nakano, having been defeated with respect to economic controls and the staffing of the IRAA's provincial heads, Konoe's weak defense of the IRAA and his ready surrender of its political nature was the final straw. Nakano resigned his permanent position within the IRAA on March 7, 1941. He simultaneously revived the Tōhōkai as a political association, making a full 360-degree turn in less than a year. Nakano explained his move by saying that while serving on the IRAA he had felt like someone locked into a "cage," forced to "bear [the] foolishness of having small, ill-educated children throwing sand and pebbles, or spitting saliva, at me."<sup>172</sup> More specifically:

"The explanation of the minister of state in the Diet made clear that the highly political nature of the IRAA had been reduced and that it has been decided to make [the IRAA] entirely into an auxiliary organ of the government to transmit the will of the rulers to the people [官意民達]... While the IRAA should transmit the will of those above to those below [上意下達], it should also provide an opportunity to the Japanese people to contribute to the progress of national policy irrespective of their social standing. The government...is making every effort to unite the home front and the people, but if one were to really drum up the morale of the entire people and exalt it actively toward military capacity, one would require one large popular movement that draws from the will of the commoners and coalesces it into a highly political leading force.... I have [therefore] decided to leave the IRAA and revive the traditional [i.e. political] nature of the Tōhōkai. Together with my followers I will raise again the flag of the Tōhōkai and start all over within the bounds of the law."<sup>173</sup>

In private, Nakano expressed his regrets about having joined the IRAA more candidly, saying: "When I joined the IRAA, I told my followers at the Tōhōkai that Hitler would have refused to participate in such a movement, but since I was a Japanese subject, I could not afford

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<sup>172</sup> Nakano Seigō in a letter to Tokutomi Sohō dated March 6, 1941, quoted in Inomata p. 440.

<sup>173</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Resigning from the IRAA" [大政翼賛会を去るの辞] in Editorial [時論], *Tōtairiku*, April 1941, p. 9-10.

to hesitate and therefore accepted.”<sup>174</sup>

Nakano’s decision to revive the Tōhōkai as a political association at a time when all the other parties had dissolved themselves caused a sensation and appeared in the editorials of various newspapers. On March 8, the *Hōchi News* welcomed the “return of the ‘real’ Nakano,” while the *Chūgai Shimbun* carried the headline: “The IRAA’s man of the people barks: A cage does not suit the character of a lion. Mr. Nakano is in a state of arousal.” According to the *Kokumin Shimbun*, Nakano’s resignation merely pre-empted the IRAA’s demise and was an act of retaliation against the IRAA’s regression. At the same time, the paper said, it was also Nakano’s declaration of war against the pro-America, pro-England and pro-status quo forces. The *Miyako News* concurred, while the *Tokyo Daily News* wrote mockingly that this sort of dramatic turn-around was, in Nakano’s case, “something to be expected.” Most critical was the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, which predicted that the Tōhōkai’s re-launch as a political association could well “cause some headaches” in the future and compared Nakano to a spineless opportunist who “in the summer sells ice, and in the winter baked sweet potatoes.”<sup>175</sup>

Twenty days after Nakano’s resignation, on March 27, 1941, all the IRAA members below Secretary General Arima also resigned. On April 2, the IRAA announced a complete reorganization. Nakano ridiculed the permanent council’s remaining members, saying that since the IRAA was neither against the cabinet’s policies nor an auxiliary institution aiding the cabinet, it should correctly be referred to as an “administrative adoration agency” [行政礼讃会].<sup>176</sup>

After leaving the IRAA, Nakano re-launched the Tōhōkai’s mass-movement activities, which culminated in the already-mentioned Grand National Convention of May 1941 and his

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<sup>174</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論] in *Tōtairiku* [東大陸], April 1941, p. 3.

<sup>175</sup> *Hōchi Shimbun* [報知新聞] March 8, 1941; *Chūgai Shimbun* [中外新聞], March 8, 1941; *Kokumin Shimbun* [国民新聞], March 8, 1941; *Miyako Shimbun* [都新聞], March 10, 1941; *Tokyo Daily News* [東京日日新聞], March 8, 1941; *Yomiuri Shimbun* [読売新聞], March 8 & 10, 1941, all quoted in Inomata, p. 442.

<sup>176</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, May 1941, p. 9.

very popular “In Reply to Roosevelt and Churchill” rally in September. Had he taken stock at the end of Konoe’s third term as Prime Minister in October of 1941, Nakano would probably have concluded that his efforts to create a popular mass party modeled on European fascist parties had produced only moderate success. Relying little on organic growth from within and mainly on incorporating already-existing mass organizations, the party had first experienced impressive growth, as state oppression drove left-wing organizations to seek shelter under the Tōhōkai’s nationalist umbrella. Party growth had, however, been obtained at the expense of ideological cohesion. The attempt to merge with the Social Mass Party in early 1939, moreover, marked the end of that pattern of growth. Subsequent attempts to catapult the Tōhōkai into preeminence - including jumping onto Konoe’s New Party wagon - also miscarried.

Nakano’s attempts to influence Japan’s policies by marshalling public opinion through speeches, demonstrations and other mass activities also produced mixed results. Many of Nakano’s foreign policy aims (e.g. escalation of the war in China, the conclusion of the Triple Alliance and occupation of French Indochina) had been carried out by Japan’s successive governments. Although it would be too much to say that Nakano was responsible for these policy decisions, by stirring up public sentiment, he certainly influenced Japan’s political elites and governments and thereby cleared the way for these controversial policies. As one after another of the foreign policies Nakano advocated was implemented, he earned a reputation as something of a visionary. The domestic reform proposals he advocated, however, were left unrealized – or, worse still, as in the case of economic controls, domestic policies were imposed from above rather than spurred from below by a popular movement, as Nakano had hoped. This mismatch between achieved foreign policy aims and thwarted domestic reform ideals only became starker under Japan’s next Prime Minister, Tōjō.



## Chapter Six: Fascism in Nakano's Thoughts and Actions

### Introduction

Historians of 1930s Japan have been divided over the question of whether Japan was fascist. Those who argue it was not contend, roughly speaking, that Japan – unlike Germany or Italy - did not have a mass party driven by a fascist ideology, that Japan lacked a charismatic leader similar to the *Führer* or the *Duce*, and that Japan's constitution survived those years largely unchanged.<sup>1</sup> Those taking the opposite position claim that, despite the constitutional continuity, Japan's political climate became more authoritarian and repressive; that although there was no charismatic figure equaling Hitler or Mussolini there was, nevertheless, the unifying figure of the Emperor supported by the emperor-system ideology; and, finally, that though there was no mass party, there was the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA), which at one point included all Japan's political parties. A third, more nuanced strain of thought - pioneered by post-war Japanese historian Maruyama Masao - proposes a synthesis according to which Japan was fascist, but its fascism – unlike those of Germany or Italy - was imposed by Japanese elites from above, even as attempts to launch anti-establishment or even revolutionary versions of fascism from below were suppressed or co-opted.<sup>2</sup>

Nakano's biography and his attempts to launch a fascist party in Japan do not – in fact, cannot – provide us with a conclusive answer regarding whether Japan was fascist. For one, the

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<sup>1</sup> Gavan McCormack, "Nineteen-Thirties Japan: Fascism?" in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 14:2 (April-June 1982), p.28 but also Peter Duus and Daniel I Okimoto, "Fascism and the History of Pre-war Japan: The failure of a Concept," in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 39:1 (November 1979) 39-63, James B Crowley "A new Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism" in "Japan in Crisis", eds. Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian (Princeton, 1974), p. 270 simply states "Prewar Japan was not a fascist country."

<sup>2</sup> Maruyama argued that even though Japan did not have a European-style fascist movement that rose to power from below, the state (i.e. the bureaucracies) adopted fascist ideology and imposed "fascism from above". He identifies three periods: The preparatory period (1919 – 1931), the period of maturity (1931 – 1936) and the period of consummation (1936 - 1945). See Maruyama Masao, "Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics", ed. Ivan Morris, (London 1963), p. 25 – 83.

debate hinges not only, among other things, on the historical evidence but equally on how one defines fascism. The broader the definition, the more likely one is to conclude that Japan was fascist - and *vice versa*.

Second, even if there were a definition of fascism on which all could agree, the evidence presented in this biography would still not provide a conclusive answer, simply because the biography of a single individual cannot yield conclusions that apply to the whole of Japan. The picture would look different, for instance, had Nakano's Tōhōkai become the popular mass party he envisioned, and had he used it to reform the Japanese constitution. Then, the case for arguing that Japan had experienced fascism from below would be stronger. Ultimately, however, Nakano failed, so while he himself may be considered a fascist, neither he nor his party ever stood for a majority within Japan, let alone for the whole nation.

Still, Nakano's attempt to launch a mass movement modeled on the European fascist parties of the 1930s, with the aim of altering Japan's constitution and reconfiguring international relations in East Asia, was perhaps the closest adaptation of European fascism in pre-war Japan. Nakano's interpretation of fascism does, therefore, raise some important questions and hopefully also provides some satisfying answers.

One question that guides us through this chapter is whether Nakano and his party really were fascist in substance or whether they were only imitating fascism without having grasped its essence. As Nakano introduced fascism to Japan, the ideology passed through two major filters that served to alter it from its European form. Nakano's own understanding and misunderstanding of fascism, for one, distorted the ideology in important respects. He then had to adapt that already-altered understanding of fascism to Japanese realities, making important concessions along the way. The final outcome resembled fascism in many respects, but there are some important aspects of the ideology that that Nakano either failed to grasp or that he refrained from trying to apply to Japan. In this chapter, we examine how Nakano altered fascism as he attempted to transfer it from Europe to Japan, then analyze the extent to which Nakano and his Tōhōkai

party may be considered fascist.

### **Ignoring Fascism's Ugly Side**

Present-day readers are likely to wonder how Nakano could fail to be revolted by the crimes committed in fascism's name. Italian Fascism and, especially, German Nazism have taken the place of ultimate evil in the moral geography of modern (post-WW2) discourse. One therefore cannot help but wonder how someone as highly-educated and well-informed as Nakano, who resented racism and fought government oppression throughout the course of his life, did not see through the fascist propaganda. The easy answer is, as Muro Kiyoshi put it, that Nakano in the 1930s did not know what we know today.<sup>3</sup> On its face, this interpretation is correct - as is Inomata's statement that though Nakano may have known about the concentration camps, he did not know that they were death factories.<sup>4</sup> After all, most of Nakano's global contemporaries - many of whom had more intimate knowledge of Germany and Italy - also failed to detect European fascism's murderous and racist nature. The fact that many others made the same mistake, however, does not explain Nakano's embrace entirely, for a minority of his peers did indeed grasp fascism's darker side fully. The question thus remains: Why was Nakano among the many who were fooled and not among the few who were not? Can his naïve perception of fascism be explained by a dearth of information, as Muro and Inomata have suggested? Or was it more a reluctance on his part to investigate the available information?

The fact that information about fascism's ugly side, and especially about Nazism, was available in Japan suggests strongly that Nakano chose to ignore the evidence. In the early 1930s, interested readers in Japan could find a large body of Japanese-language literature about fascism written by both foreign and Japanese authors. The available literature included various

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<sup>3</sup> See Muro Kiyoshi [室潔], "Topple Tōjō - An Appraisal of Nakano Seigō" [東条討つべし 中野正剛評伝], (Tokyo, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> See Inomata, p. 398.

translations of the major works written by European fascist activists and thinkers (Hitler's "Mein Kampf" was translated at least ten times before the end of the war,<sup>5</sup> while Mussolini's collected works appeared at least twice in Japanese<sup>6</sup>); propaganda publications of the Italian and German governments translated into Japanese;<sup>7</sup> accounts of political conditions in Germany and Italy written by Japanese nationals who had visited or lived there;<sup>8</sup> serious academic writing on the subject; as well as biographies,<sup>9</sup> portraits,<sup>10</sup> cultural histories,<sup>11</sup> and satirical treatments in the form of theatre pieces, caricatures and comics.

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<sup>5</sup> The ten translations of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* are: (1) Ōkubo Yasuo [大久保康雄], trans. "My Struggle" [わが闘争], (Tokyo: Mitsukasa Shobō [三笠書房], 1938) (2) Hanaen Kanejō [花園兼定] and Komiyayama Bonzen [小宮山凡禅], trans., "Mein Kampf" [まいん・かむぷ] (Tokyo, 1939) (3) Murobuse Takanobu [室伏高信], trans., "My Struggle" [我が闘争], (Tokyo, 1940) (4). Araki, Tokiji [荒木時次], trans., "My Struggle for Victory" [我が勝利への闘ひ], (Tokyo, 1941) (5). Sakai, Ryūji [坂井隆治], trans., "My Struggle" [余の闘争] (Ōsaka, 1941) (6) Mizuno Hiroshi [水野宏], trans., "My Struggle" [我が闘争] (7) Takayama Yōkichi [高山洋吉], trans., "The development of My Struggle" [わが闘争の展開], (Tokyo, 1941) (8) Okuno Shichirō [奥野七郎], trans. & ed., "The summary of Mein Kampf" [要約マイン・カンプ], (Ōsaka, 1941) (9) Manabe, Ryōichi, [真鍋良一] trans., "My Struggle" [吾が闘争], 2 vols., (Tokyo: Kōfūkan [興風館] 1942) (10) Itō Takeshi [伊藤斌], trans. & ed., "My Struggle" [我が闘争], 4 vols., (Tokyo, 1942-44).

<sup>6</sup> The two translations are: (1) Benito Mussolini, [ムッソリーニ・ベニト], "Mussolini's collected works" [ムッソニーニ全集], trans. & ed. Suzuki Ritaku [鈴木利貞], 10 vols. (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1935-6) and (2) Benito Mussolini, [ムッソリーニ・ベニト], "The collected works of Benito Mussolini" [ムッソニーニ全集], trans. & ed. Yamamoto Sansei [山本三生], 10 vols. (Tokyo: Kaizōsha [改造社], 1941).

<sup>7</sup> To mention just one example: Francesco Grossi, [グロッシフランチェスコ]; "The fascist state" [ファシズム国家]; compiled by the PR office of the Italian embassy [伊太利亜大使館情報室], (Tokyo, 1940).

<sup>8</sup> See Kondō Haruo [近藤春雄], "The Nazi Youth Movement – the Hitler Jugend and the Arbeitsdienst" [ナチスの青年運動 ヒットラー青少年団と労働奉仕団] (Tokyo, 1938); Kondō Haruo [近藤春雄], "Nazism and Youth" [ナチズムと青年] (Tokyo 1943), but also Futara Kōtoku [二荒芳徳], Germany rose [独逸は起ちあがった], (Tokyo: Jitsugyō-no Nihonsha [実業之日本社] March, 1938).

<sup>9</sup> Ikeda Hayashinori [池田林儀], "Hitler" [ヒットラー], (Tokyo, 1933).

<sup>10</sup> For example Emil Ludwig, "Talks with Mussolini" [ムッソニーニと語る], published in the "Bulletin of the Japanese Readers' Association" [日本読書協会会報], (Tokyo, March 1933), vol. 149, p. 51-122. The abbreviated Japanese translation was prepared by Kurihara Furushiro [栗原古城] from the English text: Ludwig, Emil; "Talks with Mussolini" (London, 1932).

<sup>11</sup> One example in this category is Sagara Morimine [相良守峰], "The Spirit of the German People" [独逸人のこころ], (Tokyo 1941).

Much of the writing on fascism was positive, to be sure. Some was even laudatory. When such works were translated, parts thought to be offensive to a Japanese audience were frequently omitted. Most translations of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" prepared before the war, for instance, did not include Hitler's classification of Japan as a culture-bearing society, somewhere in between the culture-creating Aryan master race and the culture-destroying Jewish race.<sup>12</sup>

But a vocal minority of critical texts had also been translated and published, at least in part, in Japan by the time Nakano traveled to Europe in the winter of 1937/38. Among them were Francesco Nitti's "Mussolini's Terror Regime - My Escape from Italy"<sup>13</sup> (Nitti had been Prime Minister of Italy before he fled the country to escape fascist oppression); Ossip Piatnitski's "The Fascist Dictatorship in Germany,"<sup>14</sup> Robert A. Brady's "The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism,"<sup>15</sup> Palme Dutt's "Fascism and Social Revolution,"<sup>16</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard's "The German Phoenix,"<sup>17</sup> "The Iron Fist in Germany," published under the alias Nordicus;<sup>18</sup> and the

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<sup>12</sup> See Miyake Masaki, "Hitler and Japan [ヒットラーと日本]", in *History and People* [歴史と人物], vol. 3, no.9, p. 168.

<sup>13</sup> Francesco Saviero Nitti, "Mussolini's terror regime and my escape from Italy" [ムッソニ恐怖政治と伊太利脱出記]; trans. Akaike Saburō [赤池三郎] from the English "Ex-Premier of Italy" (Tokyo, 1930).

<sup>14</sup> Ossip Piatnitski, "La Dictature Fasciste en Allemagne" [The Fascist Dictatorship in Germany] (Paris: Bureau d'Édition, 1934), translated into Japanese by Yoshida Ei'ichi [吉田栄一], under the title "German Fascist Theory" [ドイツ・ファシズム論], (Tokyo, 1936).

<sup>15</sup> Robert A. Brady, "The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism" [独逸ファシズムの精神と機構], published in the "Bulletin of the Japanese Readers' Association" [日本読書協会会報], (Tokyo, November 1937), vol. 205, p.1-122. The abbreviated translation by Kurihara Furushiro was based on the English text: Brady, Robert A., "The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism" (London: Gollanc, 1937). The English original was reprinted in 1971 by Viking Press, New York.

<sup>16</sup> A Cambridge-England-born Englishman of Indian origins, Dutt had been educated at Oxford, and in 1920 joined the Communist Party, to become editor in chief of its organ the "*Labor Monthly*". His treatise "Fascism and Social Revolution" (London, 1934) was translated into Japanese by Matsuhara Hiroshi [松原宏] and published under the title "Fascist Theory" [ファシズム論], (Tokyo, 1935).

<sup>17</sup> Oscar Garrison Villard, "The German Phoenix" [不死鳥独逸], published in the "Bulletin of the Japanese Readers' Association" [日本読書協会会報], (Tokyo, June 1933), vol. 152, p.1-60. The abbreviated Japanese translation was prepared by Kurihara Furushiro [栗原古城] from the English text: Garrison Villard, Oswald; "The German Phoenix" (New York, 1933).

“Brown Book of Hitler Terror,”<sup>19</sup> edited and published by the World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism (of which Albert Einstein was president). These critical Western voices were flanked, moreover, by equally critical Japanese authors. Tabata Tamehiko’s [田畑為彦] “A Study of German Politics and Economics”<sup>20</sup> and the works of Imanaka Tsugumaro [今中次麿]<sup>21</sup> are just two examples.

Given that Nakano was a lifelong avid reader, not only of the daily press, but also of books – particularly those on politics - and that he surrounded himself with intellectuals and scholars, it is highly unlikely that he never read any of these works or, at least, heard about them in discussions with his peers.<sup>22</sup> The various crimes committed by the National Socialists by the end of 1933 (their first year in power), for instance, were listed in the “Brown Book of Hitler Terror.” The abridged Japanese translation contains 50 pages describing in detail tortures, concentration camps, murders, anti-Semitic violence, and state terrorism, as well as a critical assessment of the fire at the *Reichstag*. It still surprises the modern reader for being both shocking and shockingly long.

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<sup>18</sup> Nordicus, “Hitlerism – The Iron Fist in Germany” [ヒートレリズム]; published in the “Bulletin of the Japanese Readers’ Association” [日本読書協会会報], (Tokyo, April 1932), vol. 138, p.199. The abridged Japanese translation was prepared from the English text: Nordicus; “Hitlerism” (New York, 1932).

<sup>19</sup> World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism, “The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror” [ヒトラー一兇暴政治], published in the “Bulletin of the Japanese Readers’ Association” [日本読書協会会報], (Tokyo, January 1934), vol. 159, p.159-212. The translation was prepared by Oda Ritsu [小田律] from the English text with the same title published originally in London in 1933.

<sup>20</sup> Tabata, Tamehiko [田畑為彦], “A Study of German Politics and Economics” [独逸政治経済研究], (Tokyo, January 1934).

<sup>21</sup> Imanaka Tsugumaro [今中次麿]; “A General Theory of Modern Dictatorships” [現代独裁政治学概論] vol. 1; “The History of Modern Dictatorships” [現代独裁政治史総説] vol. 2; “Theory of the Fascist Movement” [ファシズム運動論] vol. 3; and “National Socialist Theory” [民族的社会主義論] vol. 4; (Tokyo, 1932).

<sup>22</sup> For example, after having had dinner with Kyosawa Kiyoshi in Rome at the end of 1937, the latter presented him with a copy of George Ward Prices’s “I Know these Dictators” (New York, 1938). Although the book can hardly said to be critical, it shows that there was a lively exchange and debate on the nature of Fascism and Nazism among Japanese intellectuals. See Kiyosawa, Kiyoshi [清沢洌], “The Wartime Diary of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi”, translated by Eugene Soviak and Kamiyama Tamie, (Princeton, 1999), p. 99.

By reading Oswald Dutch's "Hitler's Twelve Apostles,"<sup>23</sup> Nakano could have learned that Gestapo chief Himmler, whom Nakano had met personally in Germany, was "cruel," "capable of torturing someone to death or shooting him over a trifling problem," and could go "sadistically berserk" [残酷狂暴]. Nakano could also have heard about the corrosive effect the Gestapo had had on the fabric of German civil society: "Trust between relatives, let alone between friends, has been completely destroyed. Germans living in Germany or overseas cannot openly criticize the Nazi system, because they never know if the person they are talking to is not somehow related to the Gestapo."<sup>24</sup>

Having been a journalist and staunch critic of government misinformation, one would expect Nakano to have been more sensitive to the ways in which European fascist regimes trampled press freedom. Did he really not hear what Tabata had to say about the Nazi approach to civil society as early as 1934?:

"The present authoritarian government has unified all institutions. Freedom has been destroyed, and in a matter of a few hours, the nation has been turned into a prison. The total control of the press, the radio and the film [industry] means that the people have been locked up utter darkness. Germans do not know what happens in their own country."<sup>25</sup>

In short, it was not as if Nakano's move to the right and his adoration for European fascism took place in an environment that lacked information about European fascism's darker sides. Why did he not put any weight on this disturbing evidence?

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<sup>23</sup> Oswald Dutch, "Hitler's Twelve Apostles" [ヒットラーの十二使徒] published in the "Bulletin of the Japanese Readers' Association" [日本読書協会会報], (Tokyo, August, 1940), vol. 238, p. 177-234. The abbreviated Japanese translation was prepared by Oda Ritsu [小田律] from the English text: Oswald Dutch, "Hitler's Twelve Apostles" (London, 1939).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. All quotes taken from pp. 199 – 204.

<sup>25</sup> Tabata, Tamehiko [田畑為彦]; "A Study of German Politics and Economics" [独逸政治経済研究], (Tokyo, January 1934), p. 88.

### Conviction or Convenience: Adapting Fascism to Japan

In some instances, it may have been a genuine conviction on Nakano's side that the negative information about fascism that made its way to Japan distorted the facts, and that the critical perspectives he heard were outweighed by more-positive information obtained elsewhere. For every critically negative opinion of fascism, in fact, there were many more positive ones. Though Nakano may have heard or read about descriptions of bureaucratic inefficiency in Germany, for instance, he likely preferred to give credence to the more numerous reports out of Germany stressing the Nazi regime's uncomplicated and un-bureaucratic *modus operandi*. Nakano may likewise have genuinely believed that fascism did not destroy the individual but rather "energizes the total by respecting the individual."<sup>26</sup> Even his belief that fascism's violent side was the exception rather than the rule may have been genuine, for the popular movement he launched in Japan refrained consistently from violence.

In other cases, however, it seems that he consciously turned a blind eye to certain issues. The pervasive racist component in Nazi ideology and practice is but one example. Nakano knew the Nazis were generally racist and specifically anti-Semitic. When meeting Goebbels in 1938, Nakano asked whether the Nazis were not "a bit too extreme with their anti-Semitism," but did not pursue the issue when Goebbels explained that "Jews are simply of an inferior race."<sup>27</sup> Nakano had read Hitler's "Mein Kampf" (probably in its English translation) both in 1936 and again on the way to Europe a year later. On the 1937 trip, Nakano traveled in the company of Kuroda Reiji, who prepared the first unabridged translation of "Mein Kampf" into Japanese. It is unthinkable that he did not read the sections detailing Hitler's views on Asians' racial inferiority,

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<sup>26</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, January 1941.

<sup>27</sup> Nakano Seigō "People, Stand Up! – returning from Italy and Germany" [国民よ起きて — 独伊より帰りて], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1938, p. 35.



a race Hitler viewed as merely a “culture-bearing people.”<sup>28</sup> He probably also knew that Nazi racism did not make an exception for Japanese. Reports of racist acts perpetrated against Japanese citizens living in Germany had reached and shocked Japan in the 1930s.<sup>29</sup> So we are left to conclude that the same Nakano who, as a young man, was outraged at Western racism against Asians consciously ignored or simply played down Nazi racism in his later writings about fascism.

There were also instances where Nakano clearly distorted the facts or changed his description of fascism to suit his political interests. Consider his rosy description of the Nazi spy network in 1941:

“If the Nazis have placed their party members in all layers of society, then they have done so with the intention of using them like ears that will bring the needs of the people to the attention of those in power [下情上通]. This is not a spy scheme with the purpose of oppressing the people, but a scheme that aims to protect the interest of the people, in cases where capitalists, provincial officials, or public groups abuse their position and power and take actions that are not in line with the Nazis’ original intentions ... Only people who are kind to the people, who show both compassion and understanding, qualify to be hired for this sort of job. They must protect the interest of the people to the last, gather the simple and honest wishes of the people so that the power of the party may be used to realize those wishes as quickly as possible.”<sup>30</sup>

Contrast that glowing report with the following piece, published in Nakano’s magazine in 1936:

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<sup>28</sup> Hitler’s distinction between culture-creating people (Aryans), culture-bearing people (Asians) and culture-destroying people (Jews), does not seem to have upset Nakano, but it was addressed critically by other Japanese students of fascism, even if not as aggressively as one would wish. See Ishikawa Jujūrō [石川準十朗], “A Study of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* – Critical Edition” [ヒトラー「マイン・カンフ」研究・批判篇], (Tokyo: Kokusai Nihon Kyōkai [国際に本協会], May 1942), p. 623-630. (The work was initially published in three separate volumes between 1941-42)

<sup>29</sup> For example, in October 1933, German children beat up a Japanese 9-year old girl because she was not Aryan. The incident was reported in the Japanese news and caused the Japanese ambassador to file a note of protest with the German government. See *Asahi News*, October 20, 1933, p. 1 and *Asahi News*, October 24, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku* [東大陸], January 1941, p. 6.

“The Gestapo open private letters and telegrams, and listen in on phone calls. They shadow foreigners. On occasion, the Gestapo suspect a member of the Nazi party [of treason] and even suppress the state police. They infiltrate the workers in the factories with spies. They even resort to such double-faced means as intentionally distributing communist writings among the workers and then arresting those who show interest. Since all the Germans live continually under the sharp eyes of the Gestapo, they will close the window, draw the curtains, and speak in a hushed voice before talking about the discomforts of daily life, such as the scarcity of bread. In fact, the Gestapo is no better or worse than the former GPU<sup>31</sup>. It certainly does not add to the honor of Germany that it needs to have such a secret police.”<sup>32</sup>

Nakano knew the truth of German fascism in 1936 and if one asks why he chose to forget by 1941, the simple and sad truth is that it suited his political interest. Having identified himself and his movement so closely with Fascism and Nazism after 1937, he had no interest in washing the Europeans’ laundry in public. It made more sense to cast fascism in a positive light, even if such a move meant becoming something of a fascist propaganda machine. While initially Nakano may have moved closer to fascism because it dovetailed with his political convictions, in later years his adoration of Hitler and Mussolini also became a self-interested and opportunistic exercise. By praising them, Nakano indirectly promoted himself.

Finally, Nakano often had to alter important aspects of European fascism simply to suit the Japanese realities. That Nazi symbolism (e.g. the swastika) lost its allure within the Japanese cultural context and was therefore discarded by Nakano is straightforward. More interesting is the fact that the leadership principle so central to fascist ideology in Europe received relatively little emphasis in Nakano’s thought and action, simply because before long it would have brought him into collision course with the emperor ideology. Unlike the Nazis, who provided a whole set of new national symbols complete with their own interpretation of history, Nakano never challenged

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<sup>31</sup> The GPU (Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravlenye (=State Political Administration)) was the precursor of the KGB in Soviet Russia.

<sup>32</sup> World Topics [ワールド・トピックス], in *Tōtairiku*, August 1936, p. 113-114. Since the article was published without naming its author, we do not know if it was penned by Nakano or somebody else. Given that Nakano was editor in chief of the magazine, however, means that he must have read and approved of the article.

the symbols of imperial Japan.

### **Nakano: A Fascist?**

We turn now to the question of whether Nakano was Japan's "only outright fascist"<sup>33</sup> or whether he was, in the words of diplomat Shigemitsu Mamoru,<sup>34</sup> only "imitating the Nazis [ナチスカぶれ]"<sup>35</sup> without understanding what they were at heart. (The question of whether the Tōhōkai was a fascist party or only an imitation thereof is subsumed under the above.) The answer to this question relies on the definition of fascism employed, and one way of determining the answer would be to go through the many definitions of fascism put forward in the decades since fascist thought, movements and regimes have occupied scholars' minds. Such an exercise, however, would go well beyond the scope of this work. The final result, moreover, would be predictable.

In the end, the careful analyst is bound to conclude that, under one of fascism's broader definitions – sometimes labeled "fascist minimum"<sup>36</sup> – and especially under those definitions

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<sup>33</sup> John Gunther, "Inside Asia" (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938), p. 77.

<sup>34</sup> Shigemitsu Mamoru [重光葵] (1887 - 1957), diplomat and politician.

<sup>35</sup> Shigemitsu Mamoru [重光葵], "The Troubled Years of Shōwa" [昭和の動乱], (Tokyo, 1952), p. 229. In the English-language translation prepared by Oswald White, the same phrase reads as Nakano Seigō, who "thought to be shielding himself from behind a mask of Nazi beliefs". Shigemitsu Mamoru "Japan and Her Destiny – My Struggle For Peace", trans. Oswald White, (New York, 1958), p. 313.

<sup>36</sup> The term "fascist minimum" was first coined by Ernst Nolte. See Ernst Nolte, "Three Faces of Fascism", trans. Leila Vennewitz, (New York, 1963). The concept also underlies the works of George Mosse, "The Crisis of German Ideology" (New York, 1964) and A. James Gregor's "The Ideology of Fascism" (New York, 1969). More recently, Joseph P. Sottile developed a definition of a fascism minimum based on a framework that includes all three Axis states, i.e. Germany, Italy, and Japan, and not surprisingly then arrives at a definition that is broad enough to include Japan's experience. He concludes that "Generic fascism, the kind that united the Axis Powers, was essentially a revolutionary movement motivated by international conflict. Thus it is geopolitical in nature and praxis. ... Fascism simply changed the focus of the revolutionary ideal by replacing class consciousness with national, or even biological, consciousness." Joseph P. Sottile, "The Fascist Era: Imperial Japan and the Axis Alliance in Historical Perspective" in "Japan in the Fascist Era", ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p. 29.

derived from studying Italy, Germany and war-time Japan, Nakano was a fascist. As one moves from the broader definitions to the narrower, the temptation increases to qualify the conclusion that Nakano was a fascist with a kind of caveat - e.g., Nakano's thought displays some, but not all, the characteristics of fascism as defined by scholar A, B or C. This exercise could be rendered even more complex by distinguishing between fascism's accidental characteristics and its essential ones. The narrower the definitions became, the more often one would conclude that Nakano was not a fascist, because he did not display one or more essential characteristics of the very specific definition.<sup>37</sup>

Rather than engaging in an exercise with such a predictable outcome, this chapter approaches the question of Nakano's fascism differently, by delineating a list of traits scholars of fascism have deemed characteristic of fascist ideology, movements or regimes, and analyzing how well Nakano or the Tōhōkai can be said to have shared that particular trait. This approach, additionally, frees us from sticking sheepishly to definitions provided by others, enabling us instead to break such definitions down and to select those aspects that are relevant to Nakano and the Tōhōkai. Consider, for example, Renzo De Felice, whose study of Italian Fascism concludes that fascism was a uniquely Italian phenomenon and rejects the possibility of finding a common denominator in other movements.<sup>38</sup> Since neither Nakano nor the Tōhōkai were Italian, one would have to conclude that they were not Fascist in De Felice's sense, and in doing so would

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<sup>37</sup> The most obvious example of a narrow definition of fascism which would exclude Nakano and the Tōhōkai, would be that put forward by Renzo De Felice who sees fascism as a phenomenon unique to Italy and rejects the possibility of seeing fascism either as part of a larger totalitarian phenomenon or as a reactionary force against rising communism. Accordingly he denies the possibility of finding a common denominator to include other fascist movements. See Renzo de Felice, "Interpretations of Fascism", trans. Brenda Huff Everett, (Cambridge, Ma, 1977), p. 41 and p. 55-56. Other narrow definitions of Fascism or Nazism have been put forward by George Mosse, "The Crisis of German Ideology", (New York, 1964) who argued that Nazism developed in Germany and only in Germany due to social, political and cultural factors present only in Germany. Nazism was a "repudiation of European heritage" (p. 8-14); Walter Laqueur, "Fascism: Past, Present, and Future" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp 13-15; and Roberto Vivarelli, "Interpretations of the Origins of Fascism," in *The Journal of Modern History*, 63:1 (March 1991), p.29 to mention but a few.

<sup>38</sup> Renzo de Felice, "Interpretations of Fascism", trans. Brenda Huff Everett (Cambridge, MA, 1977), p. 41.

miss the opportunity to examine those aspects of De Felice's definition that resonate strongly with Nakano's thought. One could make a strong case, for instance, that Felice's notion that fascism was a revolutionary movement<sup>39</sup> could also apply to Nakano's interpretation of the ideology.

For simplicity's sake, we begin the discussion by listing the elements of fascist ideology that either do not apply to Nakano's thought or that do so only peripherally. While fascism has been called a utopian movement,<sup>40</sup> for example, the same – with the possible exception of Nakano's pan-Asian thinking – cannot be said of Nakano's ideology. Nakano did have lofty political ambitions, but many were eventually realized – even if the actualization happened in a way Nakano never would have imagined. Equal access to markets and resources, which Nakano advocated during the 1930s as an alternative to separate autark blocs, has become the foundation of the post-1945 international economic order. Popular sovereignty has become the cornerstone of Japan's post-war constitution, though it was imposed from above through the US occupation authorities and not won from below, as Nakano surely would have preferred.

Some scholars have singled out Idealism and spiritualism – or, more negatively, anti-rationalism and anti-materialism – as essential traits of fascism. In this analysis, fascism's idealist element was, in part, a reaction to the materialistic outlooks of both liberalism and socialism/communism; cast as an alternative to these ideologies, fascism laid claim to a spiritual, anti-rational world view.<sup>41</sup> Whereas liberalism and socialism claimed to have rational scientific foundations and appealed to reason as well as economic interest, fascism sought to appeal to

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 55-56.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander De Grand, "Italian Fascism" (Lincoln, 1982).

<sup>41</sup> Gregor has traced the strong intellectual current running from Hegelian neo-idealism to fascism's official philosopher, Giovanni Gentile. See A. James Gregor's "The Ideology of Fascism" (New York, 1969), p. 209-252.

emotion and non-economic needs,<sup>42</sup> or, more generally, to human nature's irrational side.<sup>43</sup> The dichotomy that characterized Western debate on these topics is absent from Nakano's thought. While Nakano distinguished between emotion and reason, and between materialism and idealism, he never saw the need to decide in favor of one or the other. His speeches and writings were always a pragmatic mixture of emotion, reason, materialism, common sense, and idealism, all sprinkled with an occasional dose of spiritualism. When necessary, he could also be anti-emotional, anti-rational, anti-idealistic, and anti-spiritual.

In 1942, while praising the idealistic spirit of sacrifice that emboldened the soldiers fighting at the front, Nakano could thus simultaneously claim that the government's stress on fighting morale was "conceptual frivolity," for Japan could not win a war of attrition against a materially superior enemy by relying on the Yamato spirit alone. The industrial superiority of England, America and Russia – countries Nakano believed "control[led] the world's resources" – was in Nakano's mind a simple fact; anyone making a "materialistic calculation" would see that the Western Powers had "a point when they say that they have an advantage." Nakano dismissed the government's stress on the soldiers' fighting spirit as propaganda, stating that "to speak lightly of spiritualism in these circumstances is abandoning one's spirit. ... It amounts to falling into frivolous idealism."<sup>44</sup>

This sober and practical approach to political questions also informed Nakano's views on art, music and culture. Italian fascism and German Nazism often used aesthetics for political purposes, typically relying on some form of pompous pseudo-classicism stressing masculine,

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<sup>42</sup> Peter F. Drucker, "The End of Economic Man", (New York, 1939), p. 129.

<sup>43</sup> George Holland Sabine, "A history of Political Theory", revised by Thomas Thorson (Fort Worth, TX: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1973). Some scholars have put the irrationality of fascism into question on the grounds that "there is nothing irrational in believing that history taught certain lessons" Roger Eatwell, "Toward a Generic Model of Fascism", in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, April 1992, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 177.

<sup>44</sup> Nakano Seigō "To raise the realm alone" [天下一人もって興る], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1942, p. 6 and 10.

military, and martial values.<sup>45</sup> Once in power, those regimes went through great efforts to control music and art, and used architecture, in particular, for their purposes. While there were similar tendencies in Japan, with some of Nakano's contemporaries condemning swing and jazz music and other Western cultural imports, Nakano was simply indifferent.<sup>46</sup> While Hitler spent his free time formulating architectural dreams which, if realized, would have turned Berlin into a megalomaniac *Über*-capital called "Germania," Nakano had no interest in architecture. The house that Nakano built himself in 1932 was not known for its beauty. Although twice as large as the previous one,<sup>47</sup> the house expressed Nakano's rustic warrior aesthetics. A simple entrance gave way to an equally simple rectangular home with white walls and wooden floors. The only luxuries were three reception rooms to entertain visitors. An interior design magazine running a report on the house concluded it was a "dreary building" [殺風景な建物],<sup>48</sup> an assessment shared by Nakano's son Yasuo.<sup>49</sup>

Described often as a man whose interests focused exclusively on politics, Nakano simply had no views on music, visual art, literature, dancing, or architecture and therefore had no clue how any of these art forms could be used for political purposes. Nakano read so little non-fiction literature that his son found it necessary to record when he did.<sup>50</sup> His children remember him as a brute, especially when compared to his wife, who was the source of urban and cultural refinement

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<sup>45</sup> On the role of aesthetics in European fascist movements and regimes see George L. Mosse, "The Fascist Revolution – Towards a General Theory of Fascism" (New York, 1999), p. 45-55.

<sup>46</sup> For the reactions of Japanese right-wing activists to the corrupting influences of Western music, art and literature see Christopher W.A. Szpilman, "Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941" in "Japan in the Fascist Era", ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p.89.

<sup>47</sup> The new house, located at Yoyogi was built on a plot of 510 *tsubo* (more or less 1,7000 square meters), and had 20 rooms on a surface of 120-30 *tsubo* (more or less 500 square meters).

<sup>48</sup> See "Visiting the Yūkōkyō" [猶興居拝見記] in *Hogaraka* [朗], April, 1938.

<sup>49</sup> Nakano's son, Yasuo, described the house as inelegant and tasteless [殺風景] and reminiscent of a primary school.

<sup>50</sup> While recovering from surgery on his vocal cords in the summer of 1940, Nakano read Yoshikawa Eiji's "Miyamoto Musashi". See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 530.

in their upbringing.

Accordingly, neither the “glorification of masculinity and youth” nor “symbols often based on historical romanticism and mysticism,” both identified by Stanley G. Payne as characteristic of fascism,<sup>51</sup> can be found in Nakano’s thought or in the symbolism used by the Tōhōkai. While Nakano supported students and ran a dorm, and the Tōhōkai had a youth organization, neither he nor the party glorified youth. He practiced *jūdō*, horseback riding and other martial arts, and while these activities have an aesthetic dimension, they remained private hobbies and never became part of a political program exalting masculinity. The symbols the party used (mostly the character for East [東] on their flags, arm bands and uniforms) had no roots in any mystical past or romantic narrative. The uniforms were modeled on those of Europe’s fascist parties and therefore had no connection whatsoever to Japan’s history or myths.

Two factors may account for Nakano’s failure to exploit symbolism more effectively by leveraging the rich imagery of Japan’s past. One may have been a lack of inventiveness, for it takes imagination to reinvent a past within which a movement’s symbols take on a meaning and power that can be harnessed for political ends. More importantly, however, the state had already established firm control over many of Japan’s national symbols by the time Nakano entered the political arena.

The situation is similar with respect to Nakano’s attitude toward leadership was similarly timid - a far cry from the “leadership principle” many analysts believe is characteristic of fascism.<sup>52</sup> The Meiji founders had already established the unifying leadership figure of the Emperor, so any Japanese fascist would-be leader would have had to compete with this powerful symbol. Nakano never took up the challenge (although he might have done so if his party had been larger). Though he was the unquestioned leader of the Tōhōkai, Nakano quickly surrendered

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<sup>51</sup> Stanley G. Payne, “A History of Fascism, 1914-1945” (Madison, 1995), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Alexander De Grand, “Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The ‘Fascist’ Style of Rule” (London, 1995), p. 84.



the role of national leader to Konoe and integrated the Tōhōkai into Konoe's structure when the latter launched the new order movement. When Nakano left the IRAA in March of 1941, he observed rightly that the move had been a mistake, telling Tsukui Tatsuo,<sup>53</sup> "I guess I was weak. Hitler would not have done it."<sup>54</sup>

Even within the Tōhōkai, Nakano did not seek to realize the fascist leadership principle. He allowed criticism from those around him and, on occasion, admitted to mistakes, thus making himself vulnerable. The differences in Nakano's and Hitler's leadership styles are nicely reflected in their respective attitudes toward horseback riding. While Nakano started riding later in life, embracing a challenge in his later years, Hitler refused to get on a horse on the grounds that it might throw him off.<sup>55</sup> While Hitler, accordingly, attracted followers on whom he could rely one hundred percent, Nakano was more than once deserted by his followers (e.g. when Nakano left the Kokumin Dōmei, Kazami Akira did not follow; when Nakano abandoned the merger with the Social Mass Party, his followers left in droves).

Finally, it is impossible to trace the main source of Nakano's imitation of European fascism to his having been influenced by any of the various fascist ideologues.<sup>56</sup> Nakano claimed to have read Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and Mussolini's biography, but he did so only after he had already formulated most of the elements of his proto-fascist ideology. As far as we know, he did not read any of the thinkers who originated fascist ideology, such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Italian neo-Idealist Giambattista Vico, Bertando Spaventa, Giovanni Gentile, the Vitalist Henri

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<sup>53</sup> Tsukui Tatsuo [津久井竜雄] (1901 - 1989), right-wing political activist.

<sup>54</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata, p. 433.

<sup>55</sup> In his biography of Hitler, Joachim C. Fest write: "He was continuously tormented by the fear of appearing ridiculous or of losing some of his authority due to a *fauxpas*. ...He would not swim, or sit in a boat, nor would he mount a horse. ... For him life was an everlasting parade before a giant audience." Joachim C. Fest, "Hitler" (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 709.

<sup>56</sup> The genealogy of fascist thought was first described by Ernst Nolte. See Ernst Nolte, "Three Faces of Fascism", trans. by Leila Vennewitz (New York, 1963).

Bergson, or the syndicalist Georges Sorel, even when their works were translated into Japanese.<sup>57</sup> Social Darwinism as set out by Herbert Spencer,<sup>58</sup> which so greatly influenced Nazi ideology and appealed to some thinkers in Japan (e.g. Professor Kanokogi, who argued that “only nations that posses strong fighting spirit have the right to exist,”<sup>59</sup> and General Ugaki Kazunari, who made frequent references to Spencer’s ideology in his diaries<sup>60</sup>) never entered Nakano’s discourse. While Nakano kept abreast of intellectual developments in the West and regularly made references in his writing to Western scholars and intellectuals, in his fascist period he seems to have been influenced mostly by the works of Carlyle, Friedrich List,<sup>61</sup> and G.D.H. Cole, none of whom can be said to have been a forefather of fascism. Nakano’s move to the right was, in large part, a reaction to the crisis of the early 1930s, not a result of his having been exposed to fascist thought. In this respect, he followed a general pattern in Japan.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Examples of translated works include: Giovanni Gentile, “The Philosophy of pure action” [純粹行動の哲学]; trans. Miura Hayao [三浦逸雄], (Tokyo: Hakuyōsha [白揚社], 1939); Arturo Marpicati, “The political theory of the fascist party: Its movement and policies” [ファシオ党政治論 その運動と理論], trans. Italo-German Culture Study Society [独伊文化研究会], (Tokyo: Risōsha Shuppanbu [理想社出版部], 1938); Alfredo Rocco, “The political theory of Fascism [ファシズム政治理論]”, transl. by Nagasaki Tarō [長崎太郎], (Nagasaki: Nagasaki Shobō [長崎書房], 1933); ten works by Alfred Rosenberg including his “The Myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [二十世紀の神話]” trans. Suita Junsuke [吹田順助] and Kamimura Kiyonobu [上村清信], (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron-sha [中央公論社], 1938); Robert Ley, “Oath to the Führer [指導者への誓], trans. Mizuno Shōji [水野正次] and Nagai Toyotarō [永井豊太郎] (Tokyo: Shinmin Shobō [新民書房], 1943); Gottfried Feder, “The theory of the German Third Reich” [独逸第三帝国の理論], trans. Takayama Yōkichi [高山洋吉]; Kurita Shoten [栗田書店], (Tokyo, 1941); and many others.

<sup>58</sup> On the role of Social Darwinism in European fascism see Stanley G. Payne, “Fascism, Comparison and Definition” (Madison, 1987), p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Christopher W.A. Szpilman, “Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941” in “Japan in the Fascist Era”, ed. Bruce Reynolds (New York, 2004), p.77.

<sup>60</sup> See Ugaki Kazunari [宇垣一成], “The Diary of Ugaki Kazunari” [宇垣一成日記], ed. Tsunoda Jun [角田順], 3 vols. (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1970), vol. 1, p. 393.

<sup>61</sup> For example in Nakano Seigō, “Appealing to the People” [国民に訴ふ], (Tokyo, 1929), p. 303.

<sup>62</sup> Szpilman argues that “the ideological responses described later arose in Japan as a result of the similarities of the postwar conditions with Germany and Italy, not as a result of direct fascist influences. These ideas were already present in Japan in the 1920s, long before Hitler rose to political prominence. It would therefore erroneous to assume that Japanese proponents of these [fascist] ideas were merely

### Totalitarianism, Corporatism and the Third Way

The case becomes more interesting with respect to Nakano's understanding of totalitarianism. According to Arendt<sup>63</sup> and Friedrich,<sup>64</sup> fascism (like Stalinism and Maoism) is by nature totalitarian. Nakano seemed to espouse this notion in his rhetoric. He used the term "totalitarianism" [全体主義] first in the 1937 Tōhōkai party platform and thereafter regularly described the party as "totalitarian."<sup>65</sup> While Nakano understood, however, that totalitarianism had grown out of the European experience of total war as waged in the years 1914-8, he failed to understand that totalitarian actually meant "total" and implied total control by the state over the individual and all aspects of society. As late as 1942, Nakano stated that "totalitarianism does not destroy the individual. By paying respect to individuality, it moves the total."<sup>66</sup> On the same occasion, he paraphrased Hitler: "He [i.e. Hitler] states that a strong person will be at his or her strongest when he or she is alone. This is a cry for the sacred individual who has awoken to the true racial totalitarianism... Hitler...is a kind of individualist who upholds the value of the individual."<sup>67</sup> The reality that totalitarianism strives for total conformity and has no room for individuality was lost on Nakano.

His understanding of totalitarianism was more akin to an expanded form of corporatism,

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imitating European fascists." Christopher W.A. Szpilman, "Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941" in "Japan in the Fascist Era", ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p.73-106.

<sup>63</sup> Hannah Arendt, "The Origins of Totalitarianism" (New York, 1951).

<sup>64</sup> Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew K Brzezinski, "Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy" (New York, 1956).

<sup>65</sup> For example, in March 1939 issue of *Tōtairiku* he described the Tōhōkai at the time as: "a totalitarian popular party based on the essence of Yamato spirit." Nakano Seigō, "Editorial"[時論], in *Tōtairiku*, March 1939 (also quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 265). Similarly in his letter to Social Mass Party president, Abe Isoo dated February 25, 1939, Nakano described the future Tōhōkai as: "an imperial way totalitarian popular party." Nakano Seigō, letter to Abe, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 378.

<sup>66</sup> Nakano Seigō "To raise the realm alone" [天下一人もって興る], quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 676.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 669.

which according to many is also a defining characteristic of fascism.<sup>68</sup> To Nakano, totalitarianism was the harmonization of different interests dividing the nation. Having described the Tōhōkai as a totalitarian party, Nakano elaborated:

“This new party does not allow class struggle, but at the same time it does not allow privileged politics, factional politics or financial interest politics. Its spirit is popular assistance of the imperial rule [万民輔翼], popular participation in politics [国民参政], and the unity of rulers and ruled [君民一体].”<sup>69</sup>

Totalitarianism could harmonize different interests because it had the totality of the people - the whole of the nation - as its object, unlike liberalism or socialism, which only stood for the interests of a party or a class. Accordingly, Nakano predicted the Tōhōkai would “abolish class privileges and class struggle.”<sup>70</sup> As we have seen, this thinking was reflected in Nakano’s attitude toward the labor unions that joined the Kokumin Dōmei in the early 1930s. He was willing to support the workers’ class interest only insofar as it was in harmony with the interest of the nation. He could not, however, afford to hold the business world to the same high standard, because he depended on their financial contributions (as reflected in his opposition to Konoe’s move to put electric utilities under public management).

A similar logic undergirded his critique of the democratic majority principle:

“Totalitarianism goes beyond the numbers and looks at the essence (applause). It won’t do for a majority to gather their voices...The affairs of the others are my affairs, while my affairs are also the affairs of the others. The affairs of the people are my affairs. The problems of the nation are my problems. It is here that the arteries of the people run,

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<sup>68</sup> Thus Toni Smith writes that fascism was corporatist in that “it claimed to respect the rights of different sectors of the population so long as they respected their obligations to the state”. Toni Smith, “Making the World Safe for Democracy”, in *Diplomatic History*, 23, (spring 1999), p.180; see also Howard Wiarda, “Corporatism and Comparative Politics: the other Great ‘ism’ ” (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

<sup>69</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial: The Tōhōkai’s Developmental Progress” [時論：東方会の発展的進出], in *Tōtairiku*, March 1939, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 242.

where their breath is harmonized, their pulse takes the same rhythm, and their blood temperature reaches the same level. It is here that they become totally one and push forward together...I believe that once this has been refined and intensified we will have totalitarianism.”<sup>71</sup>

In short, by totalitarianism Nakano meant total harmony of the people with the nation's interest, and the absence of class warfare and partisan factionalism. He failed to see that, in practice, this would quickly lead to one-party dictatorial rule.

In substituting national solidarity for social divisiveness and, especially, for class conflict, Nakano – along with many other fascists worldwide – saw totalitarianism as a third way that had evolved out of the struggle between capitalist liberalism and socialism/communism. In his eyes, totalitarianism was not reactionary or regressive, but the synthesis that developed after the failure of liberalism and socialism: “Totalitarianism does not come before liberalism, but is a new system that comes after liberalism and communism.”<sup>72</sup> Like fascism itself, Nakano's thought was a reaction to the crisis of liberalism of the interwar years.<sup>73</sup>

With respect to corporatism and the belief that fascism offered a third way out of the struggle between liberalism and socialism, Nakano can be squarely placed in the fascist camp. With respect to totalitarianism, his position is less clear. Although his pronouncements on the relationship between the totalitarian state and the individual echo the views of fascist-ideologue Giovanni Gentile, which prescribe individual liberation through total identification with the nation state,<sup>74</sup> Nakano's actions in the last years of his life speak a different language (see next chapter). Furthermore, when Nakano said totalitarianism, he never meant control over the whole

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<sup>71</sup> Nakano Seigō in his speech at the first party convention, December 9, 1938 quoted in Nakano Seigō, Editorial [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, March 1939, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Politics that win the War.” [戦争に勝つ政治], (Tokyo, 1943), p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Ernst Nolte, „Die Krise des Liberalen Systems und die faschistische Bewegung“ (München, 1968), p. 385.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph P. Sottile, “The Fascist Era: Imperial Japan and the Axis Alliance in Historical Perspective” in “Japan in the Fascist Era”, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p. 20.

of society, including education, leisure activities, the media, or the arts. He opposed, for instance, the government's encroachment on the media. And, unlike Hitler, who went to great pains to educate the German public on what art was and should be, Nakano's writings are free of aesthetic discussion. In the end, Nakano was too exclusively focused on politics to care about the true totality of society or the entirety of the citizens' private lives.

### **Nationalism, Racism and Pan-Asianism**

Fascism has often been described as a particularly rabid brand of nationalism.<sup>75</sup> It has been argued that fascist nationalism was so extreme that it turned necessarily anti-internationalist (a fact that made the export of fascist ideology inherently difficult). Other writers have added that fascist nationalism was also racist, most obviously in the case of Nazi Germany but also in the case of Fascist Italy, though one could argue that Italy's racism was a function of coming increasingly under Germany's sway.

Nakano was undoubtedly a patriot and nationalist, but love for his country did not lead him to ignore the virtues of other nations, let alone hate them for their otherness. While intellectuals around him engaged in mental acrobatics to argue for Japan's uniqueness, Nakano countered soberly that Japan was not unique and that, even if it were, such uniqueness did not mean that it was superior in any way. Nakano countered the oft-repeated argument that Japan's 3000-year history made it unique as follows:

“The 3000-year history of Japan may be glorious, but every nation is proud of its history and 3000 years is not that long in the history of mankind. If you were to pride yourself on the length of your history, then every nation could look back at hundreds of thousands of years. Since the appearance of humanity, each nation has come a very long way.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Roger Griffin, for example, defines fascism as “form of populist ultra-nationalism”. See Roger Griffin, “The Nature of Fascism” (London 1991), p. 44.

<sup>76</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Reflections in the Mirror of Manchuria and Korea” [満鮮の鏡に映して] (Tokyo, Tōhōjiron-sha, 1921), p. 85-86.

To those who argued that Japan was superior because it had never been invaded, Nakano concurred that Japan had enjoyed a relatively sheltered and undisturbed history with no outside interference on account of being an archipelago. He added, however, that having lived in “a paradise [楽天地] does not mean that this produced characteristics that one ought to be proud of...The Japanese people may consider it dishonorable when other nations are conquered over and over again,” but they forget that such conquests often steeled a country’s character. Nakano cited Germany as a prime example of a nation that had developed a strong character through multiple invasions.<sup>77</sup>

Nakano’s egalitarian attitude toward other nations and cultures did not change when he moved closer to fascism in the 1930s. The very fact that he sought to introduce and adapt fascism, a foreign ideology, to Japan, provides proof that he continued to believe that Japan could and should learn from the rest of the world. He also continued to be a convinced pan-Asianist, a line of thinking that is, arguably, a form of internationalism. When criticizing Tōjō’s leadership after the outbreak of the Pacific War, Nakano compared Tōjō not only to figures taken from East Asian history, but also to contemporary Europeans such as Clemenceau and, remarkably, to Japan’s arch-enemy, Churchill. In mid-1942, after Japan’s initial victories seemed to confirm the country’s superiority, and some of Nakano’s opponents waxed sentimental about the uniqueness of Japan’s Emperor – some even going so far as to take this uniqueness as a guarantee for certain victory - Nakano reminded his compatriots that “Japan is not the only country to have great personalities. Some can be found also abroad; we therefore expose ourselves to danger if we become lax.”<sup>78</sup> Nakano likewise framed his critique of Japan’s bureaucratic power grab as a comparison with Imperial Germany during WW1, the implication once again being that Japan

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 85-86.

<sup>78</sup> Nakano Seigō “To raise the realm alone” [天下一人もって興る], quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 680.

was not unique but rather shared a universal human experience.

Racism, which forms such an integral part of the European fascist experience, never found its way into Nakano's thinking.<sup>79</sup> Unlike Nazi Germany, which regarded the people of conquered territories as inferior – and, in fact, had no qualms about exploiting them and actually planned to exterminate them in the long run – Nakano never put the value of human life into question. He believed the inhabitants of the territories conquered and governed by Japan were to be treated with respect and as equals.<sup>80</sup> Reports of atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers upset him greatly and caused him to warn Japan's leaders that such actions rendered the whole rhetoric of an East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere hollow.

What then to make of the references to Judaism and anti-Semitism that crept into Nakano's speeches in the course of the 1930s? This is truly one of the more vexing aspects of Nakano's writing. When Nakano used the term "Jew," he did so clearly in a derogatory sense, exploiting existing anti-Semitic prejudices that had made their way into Japanese intellectual and political discourse. In doing so, he engaged in what today would be labeled racist stereotyping. His insults were, however, not aimed at Jews directly.<sup>81</sup> Nakano did not argue that Jews as a group or race were inferior to other groups or races, nor did he encourage their maltreatment, let alone their mass murder.

Nakano applied the term "Jew" to Japan's bureaucrats and war profiteers. When Minister

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<sup>79</sup> Some Japanese thinkers adopted racist ideas from German Nazism. Ikeda Shigenori (who held two German doctoral degrees) wrote several books on eugenics arguing that in order to survive as a race, Japan had to maintain its racial character, its racial purity. Another proponent of Eugenics was professor Nagai Hisomu who also studied in Germany before returning to Tokyo University who held that civilization cause racial decline as the weak and genetically inferior were kept alive and allowed to procreate (unlike in the state of nature where they would have died). For a discussion of Nagai's and Ikeda's ideas see Christopher W.A. Szpilman, "Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941" in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p.79-80.

<sup>80</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 479.

<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of anti-Semitism theories in interwar Japan see Christopher W.A. Szpilman, "Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941", in *"Japan in the Fascist Era"*, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p.81-85.



Kishi asked in 1942 for the abolition of profit-making in Japan's economy on the grounds that such thinking was foreign, Anglo-Saxon and "Jewish," Nakano not only retorted that profit-making had been a feature of Japanese economic life since long before the arrival of Western culture, but also gave his definition of what really constituted "Jewish thinking" [ユダヤ主義].<sup>82</sup> He began by stating: "In Japan, there are no Jews. It does not, therefore, make much sense to say that the Jewish elements within Japan need to be destroyed." Nakano then developed a definition of Jewishness that he claimed was based on Hitler's writings but which, in reality, bore little resemblance to the Nazi leader's beliefs.

At the risk of exaggerating, one is tempted to say that in his desire to present the Nazi ideology in a favorable light to a Japanese audience, Nakano cleansed it of its most overt racism and anti-Semitism. In Nakano's reading, Hitler claimed that Germany lost WWI because German bureaucratic and business elites were unable to rationalize and increase production. Economic controls were instead used by second-rate businessmen to create monopolies that resulted in inefficiencies. Based on this (flawed) understanding of Hitler's description, Nakano said the "Jewish nature is to enjoy the sweet honey that comes from monopolistic privileged capital." He thus defined "Jews" in economic terms, as a group of people who profited from war, rather than in religious - let alone racial - terms: "Those who break into politics with the help of corrupt means and say that they alone can enjoy war profits while the rest of people at large suffer hardships and make sacrifices - those, according to Hitler, are the Jews."<sup>83</sup> It is not clear if Nakano actually misunderstood the murderous nature of Nazi anti-Semitism or simply pretended to misunderstand. In either case, he did not promote it. While he regrettably chose to participate in the derogatory use of the term "Jew," it is clear that he did not share Nazis' murderous intentions.

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<sup>82</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, November, 1942, p. 10-12.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

One could conclude that with respect to nationalism, Nakano was not a fascist. Though strong, Nakano's nationalism never perverted into racism, anti-internationalism, or an ideology of cultural or racial superiority. The only component in Nakano's thinking that requires a disclaimer in this regard is the hierarchy implicit in his pan-Asian vision, which always put Japan at the head of any pan-Asian community. When Nakano had first encountered the Chinese revolutionaries living in exile and their Japanese supporters, he saw Japan as the teacher and China as a willing student – a viewpoint neither time nor events altered in subsequent years.

In Nakano's defense, it must be said that he believed Japan's leading role in pan-Asian relations derived not from racial or cultural superiority, but simply from the fact that Japan was industrially and militarily more advanced and powerful. When lecturing in Beijing in 1925 on the relationship between Chinese and Japanese economic development, Nakano said China should first develop its natural resources (agriculture and mining) and then, as Japan abandoned light industry for heavier, China could take its neighbor's place and move into light industry. Nakano called this developmental model a "harmonious flight formation of geese," a term well-known to students of post-war Asian economic development.<sup>84</sup> To Nakano, Japan's position at the helm of the Asian community was a natural outflow of economic and military reality, not a privilege based on innate superiority.

To what extent was Nakano's pan-Asianist talk about liberating the people of East Asia a genuine motive and to what extent was it merely a pretext for imperial expansion? Would he, for instance, have granted (or advocated granting) independence to the territories Japan occupied in the course of WW2? Given his proposal following the March 1919 Korean uprisings, according to which Korea should remain in the Empire and Korean citizens should receive the full rights accorded Japanese citizens, and, further, given the fact that Japan could hardly grant independence to territories such as Manchuria, China, or the Dutch East Indies after subsuming

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<sup>84</sup> Nakano quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 404.

their markets and natural resources within its economy, one is tempted to answer in the negative. Nakano is once more somewhat redeemed by the evidence that suggests he would have given the inhabitants of those territories rights equal to those of Japanese mainland citizens. Still, Nakano's pan-Asianist views remain among his most contradictory. Though his official anti-imperialist stance did not prevent a rather imperialistic outcome (and would never have led to liberation or independence), such an outlook in and of itself does not make Nakano a fascist.

### **Coercive Violence: Militarism and Revolution**

Several students have highlighted fascism's militarist component, expressed through its uniforms and paramilitary party structure, the martial aesthetics of its art, and ultimately through the military expansion in fascism's drive to empire.<sup>85</sup> Others have added to this evidence the adoration expressed by some fascist thinkers both for war and for the ideology's allegedly cleansing effect on society and its ennobling effect on the individual.<sup>86</sup>

Nakano, to be sure, was never an anti-militarist, let alone a pacifist. He did advocate peace, as long as it was based on justice,<sup>87</sup> but made clear that he didn't "like the hypocritical saying that when someone hits you on your right cheek, you should offer them your left. If someone hits you, I believe you should hit that person back thoroughly."<sup>88</sup> As a youth, he dreamt about a military

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<sup>85</sup> In his definition of fascism, Stanley G. Payne identifies imperial expansion as one of fascism's characteristic goals, adding that the "militarization of politics" is characteristic of its style. See Stanley G. Payne, "A History of Fascism, 1914-1945" (Madison, 1995), p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> The idea that war was ennobling was promoted in Japan by Professor Kanokogi, who had studied philosophy at the universities of Columbia and Jena, and argued that war was a "efficient purifier of human detrious...brought racial improvement" and only nations that engaged in war had a chance to persist in the Darwinian struggle for survival." Kanokogi quoted in Christopher W.A. Szpilman, "Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941" in "Japan in the Fascist Era", ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p. 77.

<sup>87</sup> See Nakano Seigō, Speech held in the Diet on January 25, 1934 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 797.

<sup>88</sup> Nakano Seigō, "The bandits in the Mountains and the Bandits in the Heart" [山中の賊と心中の賊] memorial address held on September 10, 1936 at the Japan Youth Hall on behalf of two journalists of the *Tokyo Daily News* killed in an anti-Japanese incident and reprinted under the title "The Pillar of East Asia: Japan" [東洋の支柱、日本], in "Collected Speeches by Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛氏大演説集], (Tokyo:

career and when he attacked the armed forces during his liberal years, it was not because he opposed the military's existence in principle, but rather because of bribery scandals or, most often, because of the military's interference in politics (e.g. his attacks on Tanaka Gi'ichi). Even his later opposition to the Tōjō regime was not based on a principled opposition to the waging of war by a professional military establishment, but rather on disagreements regarding how this particular war should be waged.

Nakano did, indeed, become much more pro-military in the 1930s, so much so that he was considered by some to be the army's mouthpiece in the Diet. In that sense, he shares some of the responsibility for clearing the military's way to power. Under Ishiwara Kanji's influence, Nakano's writings also acquired a military strategic component that they lacked previously. But however militarist such leanings, as well as the fact that he wore fantasy uniforms and that the Tōhōkai ran a para-military youth organization, may seem, Nakano cannot fairly be labeled a militarist. Throughout his life, including during his fascist period, Nakano upheld the belief that politics remained the prerogative of civilian politicians such as himself and that the military should not interfere therein. The Tōhōkai's election platform of 1937 stated clearly that "national defense in the larger sense will be the subject of politics, while the military will be in charge of national defense in the narrow sense."<sup>89</sup> Following the Clausewitzian dictum that "war is a continuation of politics with different means," Nakano never doubted that there was a place for military force in the political process, but he also never doubted that this place was within the framework of civilian government and should remain under its control.

Finally, Nakano's speeches and writings are entirely free from the notion - found often among fascist thinkers - that war could have any medicinal virtues, be they societal, national or individual. Nakano found the notions that war could make a man noble or correct social evils

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Asakaze-sha [朝風社], 1936), p. 375.

<sup>89</sup> See the Tōhōkai election platform in Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: Thus the Tōhōkai pushes ahead" [時論：東方会は斯く進む], in *Tōtairiku*, May 1937, p. 9.

alien. War, accordingly, never became for him an end in itself, but always remained a means. He believed, in fact, that as far as possible war should be avoided. Even his support for the southern advance in the years 1939-41 was premised on the weakness of England, France, and the Netherlands, which Nakano believed gave Japan the chance to occupy their colonial territories without triggering a war. One reason Nakano later came to oppose Tōjō is that he never wanted Tōjō's war.

Fascism has been described as a revolutionary movement.<sup>90</sup> Scholars disagree over whether this was a modernizing revolution<sup>91</sup> or the betrayal of revolution,<sup>92</sup> but revolutionary promise was one of fascism's many appeals – one that did not fail to work its charm on Nakano, who was a romantic revolutionary at heart. His admiration for Saigō Takamori, Ōshio Heihachirō and other rebels, his sympathy for the Chinese and later the Russian revolution, as well as for the Rice Riots of 1919 and the February 26 uprising, all attest to his penchant for siding with rebels. From early on, Yang Wang-ming's philosophy supplied Nakano with a rough moral justification – and arguably even an imperative – for rebellion. Nakano expanded and refined this outlook into a more systematic form when commenting on the Rice Riots. Fascism's revolutionary appeal hit Nakano on two levels. First, the ideology carried the promise of reforming domestic society so that hitherto excluded individuals could participate in politics. After returning from his European trip in 1938, Nakano did not tire of relating instances of people of humble origins rising to important positions in the state structure. Did not Mussolini, Hitler and many other Nazi leaders

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<sup>90</sup> Zeev Sternhell describes fascism as “a revolutionary ideology based on a simultaneous rejection of liberalism, Marxism, and democracy” and then adds that: “In its essential character, the fascist ideology was a rejection of ‘materialism’ (Liberalism, Marxism, and democracy being regarded as merely the three faces of one and the same materialistic evil), and it aimed at bringing about a total spiritual revolution.” Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist ideology in France* (Princeton, 1996) p. 27.

<sup>91</sup> A. James Gregor sees fascism as a modernizing revolution and fascist regimes as revolutionary movements. See A. James Gregor, *The Ideology of fascism* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> The claim that fascism's revolutionary promise was false was put forward mainly by left-leaning writers, in the context of communist interpretations of fascism. See for example Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, (San Francisco, 1997), p. 17.

come from society's lower strata? Fascism seemed to replace family background, education and age with merit, competence and popular appeal as requirements for entrée into society's upper realms. Nakano also fell for fascism's mass activities, marches and rallies, which suggested a new form of mass political participation in politics – indeed, a new form of direct democracy. It is not difficult to see how Nakano, to whom the Meiji Restoration had been an unfinished popular revolution, came to see fascism as a means of finally achieving this unfulfilled aim. After liberalism and socialism failed, fascism seemed to Nakano to be the best way to integrate the masses into the political process.

Fascism also carried the promise of revolutionizing the international order. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy posed a real challenge to the post-WW1 international settlement. In a more general sense, the fascist Axis Powers could be seen as staging a revolution of the proletarian have-not nations against the status-quo haves. Nakano's ally Kita Ikki introduced this distinction between have and have-not nations to Japan<sup>93</sup> and it is not difficult to see how it fit nicely with Nakano's views on international affairs. Since witnessing the peace negotiations in Versailles, Nakano had opposed the international order. The distinction between have and have-not nations not only provided a strong rationale for his opposition but also highlighted the common interest Japan shared with Germany and Italy. Nakano's foreign policy aims and proposals in the 1930s can be understood in this context. His support for the recognition of Manchuria in 1932-3, for Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, and for the war in China, as well as his advocacy for the Triple Alliance and the southern advance, all sprang from seeing Japan as a have-not nation locked in a struggle for survival against the resource-rich haves, namely England, France, America, and Russia. If this is taken to be the essence of fascism - as Sottile argues in formulating a fascist minimum<sup>94</sup> – then Nakano must be called a fascist.

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<sup>93</sup> See Heinz Lubasz ed. "Fascism: Three major regimes" (New York, 1973), p. 134.

<sup>94</sup> Joseph P. Sottile, "The Fascist Era: Imperial Japan and the Axis Alliance in Historical Perspective" in "Japan in the Fascist Era", ed. E. Bruce Reynolds, (New York, 2004), p. 24.

## Conclusions

All that being said, however, it remains difficult to classify Nakano categorically as a fascist. If fascism is seen as a corporatist third alternative to liberalism and socialism, as a revolutionary movement that promised a more direct form of democracy through mass political participation (however hollow the promise ultimately was) and as a rectification of international injustices through aggressive imperial expansion, then Nakano was indeed a fascist. These aspects attracted him to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and these aims were what he hoped to realize by introducing the European fascist model into Japan.

If, on the other hand, one holds that fascism's essential characteristics include utopianism, idealism, irrationalism, militarism, ultra-nationalism (with its anti-internationalist overtones), racism; the glorification of war, youth and masculinity; the leadership principle; and total control over all aspects of society and the individual, then Nakano was not a fascist.

In which direction does this author lean? Key to an answer is Nakano's attitude toward political coercive violence. While Nakano clearly fell for fascism's revolutionary appeal, he ignored the brutality that characterized fascist revolutions in Europe. Nakano sought to imitate the legal and non-violent parts of Hitler's rise to power (i.e. Hitler's election in 1933), completely blocking out the violence that came before and after. In his writings, there is no mention of the street fights between Nazis and communists before 1933, or of the systematized Nazi acts of violence against Jewish citizens thereafter.

Nakano's failure to pay heed to the violent havoc fascism wreaked in Europe sprang not from an opposition to political violence on principle. In his 1919 piece on Ōshio Heihachirō's rebellion, Nakano argued that violent illegal action was justified in certain circumstances, and he sympathized with and supported the right-wing activists who terrorized Japan in the first part of the 1930s. Likewise, he strongly advocated the use of military force against the Chinese Nationalist government in the years after 1937.

In his own actions (and those of the parties he led), however, Nakano was careful to stay within the limits of the law and not to resort to violence of any kind. From the Manchurian Incident until the end, he cast himself and his parties as the moderate alternative to violent right-wing reform. By the time he came to be called a fascist in the early 1930s, he had also outgrown some of his personality's more crude aspects. Dog fights, for instance, which he had enjoyed so much in his youth, no longer attracted him. As we shall see in the next chapter, even when driven into a corner by Tōjō, Nakano refused resort to terrorism as self-defense. The only act of political violence that Nakano carried out in the 1930s and 1940s, in fact, was to take his own life.

Nakano's inability to embrace fascism's violent brutality sprang from the same civility that caused him to reject fascism's glorification of war, as well as its anti-rationalism, its racism and its appeal to the darker sides of human nature.<sup>95</sup> As a result, the interpretation of fascism that he introduced in Japan in the 1930s was a sanitized and civilized version of Italian Fascism and German Nazism. Can fascism be civil? It is this author's belief that it cannot be, because fascism is a breakdown of civilization that opens the gates to murderous barbarity. Accordingly, in the eyes of this author, Nakano's rendition of fascism was far too civil to make him truly fascist.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> The positive evaluation of the use of violence has been identified as one of the essential characteristics by Payne in his definition of fascism. Stanley Payne, "Fascism: Comparison and Definition", (Madison, 1987), p. 3-21.

<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, if we agree with Kasza who in applying Payne's framework to Japan, divided the Japanese right-wing of the 1930s into four categories: violence-oriented fascists, violence-oriented radical rightists, nonviolent conservative authoritarians, and nonviolent renovationist authoritarians, then this author would place Nakano in the Fourth (non-fascist) group. See Gregory Kasza, "Fascism from Below? A comparative Perspective on the Japanese Right, 1931 – 1936" in *The Journal of Contemporary History*, 19:4 (October 1984), p. 608-609 and especially p. 625.



## Chapter 7: Last Stand Against Tōjō

### Introduction

After a life of zigs and zags, moving from liberalism to fascism, Nakano surprised his contemporaries in the last two years of his life with a final zag by returning to a viewpoint resembling his former liberal stance. Having spent much of the preceding decade advocating the southern advance and the need to escalate the conflict with China into a Greater East Asian War, Nakano after Pearl Harbor criticized the way in which the government conducted that war, the various laws the government passed in order to secure the public peace in Japan and, finally, the Tōjō government itself. Though some biographers have interpreted this shift in Nakano's position as a return to liberalism, it would be more accurate to say that he arrived at a highly contradictory synthesis including elements from both his liberal and his fascist periods.

Two factors drove Nakano's intellectual shift. First, Nakano was aware of Japan's increasingly dire military situation. Unlike the Japanese public, which was informed about Japan's impressive string of victories in the months immediately following Pearl Harbor but kept ignorant of the setbacks thereafter, Nakano through his acquaintances and friends in the armed services learned relatively early on about the military setbacks at Midway and Guadalcanal. He also learned, through high-ranking contacts in the civilian bureaucracies, that Japan's production increases fell far short of what was necessary to wage war against America and thus concluded fairly early that Japan would lose the war.

The second factor was Nakano's disapproval of how war itself was waged - particularly the Tōjō government's use of war as a pretext to expand its power over the populace. Nakano believed the war's purpose was liberating the people of Asia and emancipating those of Japan. While the war seemed to liberate Asia from Western colonialism, the various laws introduced under Tōjō clearly curtailed Japanese popular rights while expanding executive powers. This

expansion directly impacted Nakano, who was for the first time subjected to government interference in his speeches and writings. For example, in autumn 1941 censors blacked out 107 lines in his “Reply to Churchill and Roosevelt.”<sup>1</sup> Nakano’s alleged return to liberalism was thus, in part, a reaction to wartime authoritarianism.

Nakano’s belief that Tōjō was leading Japan into a military disaster while establishing a dictatorship eventually brought Nakano into head-on conflict with the Prime Minister - a conflict that intensified and escalated over time and, in the end, led to Nakano’s destruction. The exchange of blows between these two men provides the overarching narrative of Nakano’s last years, but within that three themes can be identified

First, as the conflict escalated, it became increasingly personal. Initially, Nakano had opposed and criticized the government’s policies, the bills it introduced into the Diet and the way in which Tōjō waged war, but not Tōjō himself. By mid-1943, however, Nakano was consumed with the idea of bringing Tōjō down. Tōjō retaliated in kind. Initially he attempted simply to silence Nakano’s criticism, and then even tried co-opting Nakano by offering him a government position, but ultimately Tōjō concluded it would be easiest to destroy Nakano altogether.

Second, each exchange of blows weakened Nakano, as he lost one weapon after another. At the end of 1942, the government stopped granting him permission to speak in public, thus effectively putting an end to his activities as a public agitator. After January 1943, increasingly strict censorship effectively ended his writing career as well. Thereafter, the Diet remained the only forum in which Nakano could publicly express his criticism of and opposition to Tōjō and his government. Tōjō cracked down on this as well, however, by having Nakano arrested - and thus kept out of the Diet - in the fall of 1943. Nakano started out fighting the government tooth and nail, but, by the end of the fight, was left both toothless and nail-less.

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<sup>1</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 565. The pamphlet in question is Nakano Seigō, “In Reply to Churchill and Roosevelt – Addressing the Japanese People” [ルーズヴェルト、チャーチルに答えて：日本国民に告ぐ], (Tokyo: Tōhōkai Publishing [東方会宣伝部], 1941).

Finally, as the conflict escalated, Nakano found himself cooperating with characters from the most unlikely quarters. In opposing Tōjō's policies in the Diet, Nakano allied himself with Miki Bukichi and Hatoyama Ichirō,<sup>2</sup> both long-time members of the established parties for which Nakano had shown little respect in the past. Nakano also worked with former Prime Ministers whom he had criticized severely – including Konoe, Okada, Yonai, Hirota, and Wakatsuki – in his quest to topple Tōjō.<sup>3</sup> He cooperated with Amano Tatsuo,<sup>4</sup> a notorious right-wing leader and a co-founder of the Kin'nō-Makoto-Musubi-no-kai, who had spent time in prison for his involvement in the May 15 scheme. Finally, Nakano received support from the very group of people he had detested all his life: the bureaucrats. Planning Board members Tanabe Tadao and Hinoshita Tōgō, for example, concluded that Japan's limited production capacity meant the country was in no position to win the war.

### **Surprise at Dawn – Pearl Harbor: Nakano's New Role**

Having become “the lonely wolf of politics”<sup>5</sup> after his withdrawal from the Diet, Nakano did not know about the Imperial Conference decision in September 1941 to attack the United States, England and the Dutch East Indies if diplomatic negotiations with Washington failed to produce a satisfactory solution. As late as December 2, 1941, Nakano urged the Tōjō government to “make a decision” and strike south rather than “watching the destruction of Japan passively.”<sup>6</sup> Nakano had even planned another giant rally on the same topic for mid-December when, on the

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<sup>2</sup> Hatoyama Ichirō [鳩山一郎] (1883-1959) lawyer, politician, and after the war Prime Minister of Japan.

<sup>3</sup> Okada Keisuke's warm reception of Nakano did not fail to impress the latter. Like Nakano, Okada had understood by 1943 that Japan had lost the war and supported Nakano in his struggle against Tōjō, in spite of all the differences that had existed between them in the past. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 713-14.

<sup>4</sup> Amano Tatsuo [天野辰夫] (1892 – 1974) lawyer, and right-wing politician.

<sup>5</sup> Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 581.

<sup>6</sup> Nakano Seigō, “We Cannot Afford to Watch the Crisis Sitting on the Fence” [危機座視するを許さず], speech held December 2, 1941, at Hibiya public Hall in Tokyo, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 583

morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>, he heard about the Pearl Harbor attack on the radio. Over the following days, amid news of military developments across Asia, it slowly dawned on Nakano that the Tōjō cabinet's war went far beyond anything he himself had advocated in previous years. Instead of only taking French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies – “lost properties without owners”<sup>7</sup> - which Nakano believed could have been done without drawing the US or the UK into a military conflict, Japan brought the war to its very doorstep by directly attacking them. The realization that Japan had sparked a conflict of such magnitude overwhelmed Nakano. When he called Ogata on the morning of December 8, his voice sounded unusually fragile, doubtful and insecure. Mitamura also recalled Nakano commenting after the attack: “We got into a quite a mess there.”<sup>8</sup>

While personally still coming to terms with the event, on the outside Nakano showed resolve. The day after the attack, the Tōhōkai officially declared its support for the government's decision to go to war.<sup>9</sup> Nakano's first public speech after Pearl Harbor – titled “After Victory, Fasten Your Helmet” - began with the words: “It moves my heart like nothing else that the Tōjō cabinet has made this grand decision, brought the ambition of the people and the military together, lit this bone-dry gunpowder and aimed the explosion against the US and England.”<sup>10</sup> Nakano congratulated the Japanese military, saying “in terms of spirit we have already won” and crowing that the move had “proven that Japan is the immovable pillar of Greater East Asia.”<sup>11</sup> Although Nakano warned that Japan should not relax after its initial victories, he was nevertheless

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<sup>7</sup> Nakano Seigō in a lecture on Tokutomi Hideyoshi held October 10, 1940 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 479.

<sup>8</sup> See Ogata, p. 16 and Mitamura quoted in Inomata p. 460.

<sup>9</sup> The Declaration issued by the Tōhōkai (penned by Nakano) can be found in Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, June 1942, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Nakano Seigō, “After Victory, Fasten your Helmet” [勝って兜の緒を締めよ], speech held December 17, 1941 at Ryōgoku Hall in Tokyo, reprinted in Nakano Seigō, “This One Battle: How the People should Fight!” [此ノ一戦: 国民如何に戦ふべきか! ], (Tokyo: Tōhōkai Propaganda Department [東方会宣伝部], January, 1942), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 5 and 7.

optimistic about the military situation, believing that the islands of the Pacific would provide Japan with a defensive line of unsinkable aircraft carriers and that the resources of the newly conquered Dutch and French territories would enable Japan to fight a long-term war if necessary.<sup>12</sup> Most importantly, however, Nakano believed that the attack had fired up the emotions of various Asian independence leaders (some of whom were in the audience, including India's Bihari Bose) who would come to support Japan's war against the Western powers. Applause greeted Nakano's line that "people from China and all over Asia stand up and shout 'Banzai'."<sup>13</sup>

### **The Shadows of War**

Nakano's prominence allowed him to shield himself and his family from many of the war's material aspects. Always a great meat lover, Nakano had long relied on the students of his dorm to bring him meat from Tokyo's surroundings amid the food shortages that had become a feature of ordinary Japanese life well before Pearl Harbor. As foodstuffs became scarcer during the war, Nakano raised chickens and supplemented his diet with eggs; later still he kept goats for making cheese.<sup>14</sup> Though some of Nakano's beloved horses were requisitioned for the war effort and shipped to China, he kept enough to continue riding every morning. And when gasoline rations began, Nakano was able commute to the Diet in a horse-drawn carriage. Being wealthy also gave Nakano the ability to prepare for future air raids by building himself a house well outside the city center, which would be the likely focus of any aerial bombardment.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Nakano Seigō, "The General Election and the Tōhōkai" [総選挙と東方会], in *Tōtairiku*, April, 1942, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Nakano Seigō, "After Victory, Fasten your Helmet", speech held at Ryōgoku on December 17, 1941, reprinted in Nakano Seigō, "This One Battle: How the People should Fight!", p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 553 and p. 722.

<sup>15</sup> Nakano's villa built earlier in the Tamagawa region west of Tokyo had been let to his sister Mura and her family after the early death of her husband. Nakano soon built another house for him and his family in

Some of the war's other impacts - including the drafting of his sons, followers and party members - proved more difficult to mitigate. With his university curriculum shortened to three and a half instead of the usual four years, in the fall of 1942, Nakano's third son, Tatsuhiko, was drafted into military service. A year later, in the fall of 1943, all the remaining men in Nakano's once-lively household were drafted, including his fourth son, Yasuo, and the students then living at Nakano's dorm. Nakano's followers and many Tōhōkai members were likewise drafted into military service, creating labor shortages for Nakano's political activities, despite the fact that some who returned from the front rejoined the party.<sup>16</sup>

More vexing in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, however, was the war's impact on Japan's political climate. Nakano's conception of a war meant to liberate the people of Asia and Japan seemed to have taken a wrong turn, as the government used the war as a pretext to expand its powers at the expense of those of the citizenry. Within a week of the Pearl Harbor attack, war euphoria helped the cabinet pass the "Temporary Law Regulating Free Speech, Publishing and Association" [言論出版集会結社等臨時取締法]. Nakano opposed the law privately, telling Parliament member and follower Mitamura to "beat this bill into a pulp," but kept his public criticism more veiled.<sup>17</sup> Speaking in mid-December, Nakano argued that Western legalism [法治主義] as a means of suppressing people was alien to Japan. In its place he

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the same neighborhood. According to his son, this was motivated by Nakano's experience of the German Zeppelin air raids on London during WW1. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 552-53.

<sup>16</sup> Two of the students staying at Nakano's dorm actually fell while serving their country: Tachibana Masasuke [立花正介] from Fukuoka fell in central China, while Koga Yasuo [古賀康雄] fell in the fighting around Nomohan. Others returned from the war to join the Tōhōkai. Examples include Miyasaki Yoshimasa [宮崎吉政] who was drafted in 1941, but became active in the Tōhōkai student group after his return and Takadera Shinji [高寺信次] who worked as an editor for *Tōtairiku* after returning from the front. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 428.

<sup>17</sup> Nakano quoted in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?" [中野正剛は何故自刃したか] (Tokyo, 1949), p. 39.

proposed “moving from legalism to humanism, from a legalist nation to a moral one [道義].”<sup>18</sup> Nakano’s criticism was too little too late. The law – under whose provisions Nakano himself was arrested in 1943 - passed in the 78<sup>th</sup> extraordinary Diet session. When Tōjō announced his next move aimed at strengthening his power – i.e., calling a general election for early 1942 and announcing that the government would financially support so-called “recommended” or “endorsed” candidates (selected by a committee headed by former Prime Minister Abe Nobuyuki) – Nakano decided to put forward a more determined resistance.

### **Tōjō, the 1942 Election and the Yokusan-Seiji-kai**

It was common practice in contemporary Japan for an incoming government to call an election in hopes of gaining a favorable majority in the Diet. Endorsing specific candidates and supporting them financially (government-endorsed candidates received more than 5,000 Yen toward their campaign coffers), however, was almost unprecedented. When the government experimented with endorsements during the late 1941 Nagasaki city council elections, which served as a dry run for the 1942 general election,<sup>19</sup> Tōhōkai member Mitamura Takeo severely attacked the practice in the Diet.<sup>20</sup> On February 22, 1942 the Tōhōkai declared that while it would

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<sup>18</sup> Nakano Seigō, “After Victory, Fasten your Helmet” [勝って兜の緒を締めよ], speech held at Ryōgoku on December 17, 1941, reprinted in Nakano Seigō, “This One Battle: How the People should Fight!”, p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> The Nagasaki City Council elections of July 1941 were carried out under the direction of the Head of General Affairs of Nagasaki province. A screening committee was set up and charged with recommending 44 candidates. Then the committee was turned into a political party, the so-called “Society Dedicated to the Establishment of City Politics Assisting the Imperial Rule” [翼賛市政建設期成会] which supported its members (the recommended candidates) and exerted pressure on the twenty-two non-recommended free candidates to withdraw from the race. The nine who persisted were subjected to heavy interference in their election campaigns. See Nakatani Takeyo [中谷武男], “A War-time History of the Diet” [戦時議会史], 1975, p. 80.

<sup>20</sup> After Nakano’s resignation from the Diet in spring 1939, the Tōhōkai’s parliamentary leadership had passed to Mitamura Takeo. Speaking in the 77<sup>th</sup> extraordinary Diet session, Mitamura Takeo commented critically on the practice of government-endorsed elections such as that in Nagasaki and warned that: “If we continue in this direction Japan’s constitutional politics will become extremely loose” and in fact would be the “end of constitutional politics” and usher in “a bureaucratic slave system.” Mitamura Takeo, speech in 77<sup>th</sup> Diet held on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 599.

“continue to support the Tōjō cabinet’s decision to execute the Greater East Asian war” it also would “reject the recommendations made by the people around Abe Nobuyuki and declare that all our candidates will be recognized by our president Nakano Seigō.”<sup>21</sup> In the next month’s issue of *Tōtairiku*, Nakano added that a government endorsement would be a “blemish to us,”<sup>22</sup> thus making clear that the Tōhōkai would maintain its independence.<sup>23</sup> In a letter to his former teacher of Chinese classics, Masuda Hiroyuki, Nakano remarked more candidly: “I cannot let it pass tacitly when the territory of our country expands every day while at the same time our people are reduced to slaves. ... We should show ourselves at our best and rebuild a nation worthy of the fruits of wars.”<sup>24</sup>

The Tōhōkai put 46 candidates into the race, of which Nakano hoped one third would get elected. Nakano formulated and published the party’s election platform in a polemic pamphlet.<sup>25</sup> He began by noting that Japan was fighting a long-term war, which - unlike short wars decided by the “value of arms” – would be decided by “political instruments on the home front.”<sup>26</sup> Nakano stated axiomatically that in order “to win the final victory ... it is necessary to manifest the political power of the Japanese people,” for “only countries whose people manifest political

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<sup>21</sup> Tōhōkai declaration of February 24, 1942 quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 600.

<sup>22</sup> Nakano Seigō, “The General Election and the Tōhōkai” [総選挙と東方会], in *Tōtairiku*, April 1942, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> In addition to Nakano’s Tōhōkai the recommended election was also opposed by the Dōkōkai [同交会] to which Hatoyama Ichirō belonged. See Nakatani Takeyo [中谷武男], “A War-Time History of the Diet” [戦時議会史], 1975, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Nakano to Masuda, dated March 25, 1942 quoted in Inomata, p. 478-9.

<sup>25</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Politics that win the War.” [戦争に勝つ政治] (Tokyo: Musashino Shobō [武蔵野書房], July, 1943). Originally published under the title “The Tōhōkai Movement during the Greater East Asian War” [大東亜戦争下の東方会運動], (Tokyo, March 1942).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.



power possess the power to resist, the power to forcefully attack.”<sup>27</sup> In support of this general statement, Nakano pointed to the historical experience of WW1:

“During the last great war in Europe, the Kaiser’s bureaucratic politics, which had no popular organization and no popular political power, were unable to win even against the liberalism of the US, England and France. Imperial Russia with its despotic politics had no stamina and provided us with an example of collapse.”<sup>28</sup>

Nakano contended that Germany’s biggest mistake had been its authoritarian bureaucracy, which attached more value to bureaucratic expertise than to the wisdom of the people and, in doing so, imposed highly inefficient economic controls.<sup>29</sup> Nakano fretted that, while Germany and Italy had learned from their WW1 mistakes, overcoming liberalism and socialism to eventually develop totalitarianism, Japan risked embracing liberalism with no redeeming conversion to totalitarianism. The fear that Japan would repeat Germany’s experience during WW1 became a dominant theme in Nakano’s writing in the following years.<sup>30</sup> Nakano’s pamphlet concluded:

“Totalitarianism does not come before liberalism, but is a new system that comes after liberalism and communism. Having advocated the New Order [新体制], we must not regress a single step and return to either bureaucratic politics or despotic politics. Instead we must take a step forward and manifest the totalitarian political power of the people suited to our polity [国体].”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 48-49.

<sup>30</sup> See Nakano’s critique of Japanese politics during the Pacific War were based on his understanding of Germany’s historical experience during WW1. On this point see Muro Kiyoshi [室潔], *Topple Tōjō – An Appraisal of Nakano Seigō* [東条討つべし 中野正剛評伝], (Tokyo: Asahi News Publishing [朝日新聞社], 1999), p.105-54.

<sup>31</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Politics that win the War.” [戦争に勝つ政治], (Tokyo, 1943), p. 5.

In particular, Nakano criticized not only the economic controls introduced by Japan's bureaucracies but also their heavy-handed approach to governing the newly conquered territories, which he believed could prevent those territories from becoming Japanese allies. In this context, Nakano described role of the Tōhōkai as follows: "To speak for those who cannot speak, and exert pressure on behalf of those who cannot do it themselves, with the aim of establishing justice in the realm - that is the sacred duty of which we are put in charge."<sup>32</sup> The party's platform, in short, was: Support the war but fight expansion of the bureaucrats' power by demanding expansion of the people's power.

Over the coming weeks, Nakano threw himself into the election campaign with characteristic passion and perseverance. He toured the country giving well-attended speeches in the electoral districts of his fellow Tōhōkai candidates, which meant he could devote only two days to campaigning in his own electoral district in Fukuoka. While he still managed to be re-elected with more votes than the other three successful Fukuoka candidates, the national election results were shockingly disappointing.<sup>33</sup>

The Tōhōkai's vote tally rose to 345,519 (2.9% of all votes cast) in 1942 from 221,445 (2.2%) in 1937, but only seven of the 46 Tōhōkai candidates were elected - less than half of Nakano's goal.<sup>34</sup> Even veterans such as Sugiura Takeo and Tanaka Kiyotatsu lost their seats. The party's failure was due, in large part, to the fact that the Tōhōkai candidates had run without the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Ogata goes as far as stating that the election results were a "shock" to Nakano. Ogata, p. 176.

<sup>34</sup> The names of the elected Tōhōkai candidates were Nakano Seigō (Fukuoka), Nakamura Matashichirō [中村又七郎] (Niigata prefecture), Honryō Shinjirō [本領信治郎] (Tokyo), Suzuki Shōgo [鈴木正吾] (Aichi prefecture), Ōishi Masaru [大石大] (Kōchi Prefecture), Wakugami Rōjin [湧上鰐人] (Okinawa prefecture), and Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫] (Gifu prefecture). For a list of all the candidates, their election districts, their previous experience and votes gathered, see Nagai Kazu [永井和], "The Founding of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立]; in *Shirin* [史林]; Vol. LXI, No. 4; July 1978; p.130-33.

government's endorsement.<sup>35</sup> Many of the Tōhōkai's candidates, moreover, had no prior experience in election campaigning, let alone strong constituencies in their electoral districts. Only seven of the Tōhōkai's 46 candidates were veterans who had run for the Tōhōkai in the previous election,<sup>36</sup> and of the remaining 39, just 19 had prior experience campaigning (for other parties), leaving another 22 brand-new to the process. With nothing akin to a *jiban* or electoral base in their home province, they relied instead entirely on the Tōhōkai-affiliated organizations for support.

Following the election, Tōjō tried strengthening his already-firm hold on the Diet by establishing a single party called Yokusan-Seiji-kai [翼賛政治会, or "Imperial Rule Assistance Political Association"], meant to subsume all other political parties represented in parliament. Most, including parties lacking government endorsements, joined readily, but Nakano and the Tōhōkai refused initially. Even after one member left the Tōhōkai to join the Yokusan-Seiji-kai, and the remaining party members urged Nakano to concede, he retorted: "If you want to go, go ahead. I will stay behind alone and continue to fight from within the Tōhōkai."<sup>37</sup> Only after the government threatened to use the new Law Regulating Free Speech, Publishing and Association to deny the Tōhōkai's right to exist did Nakano grudgingly give in by preemptively dissolving the party.

Thus, the Tōhōkai abandoned its status as a political society and once again became a think tank dedicated to "fostering ideas that will become the foundation of Japan's politics, pouring our

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<sup>35</sup> Compared with the performance of other non-endorsed candidates, the Tōhōkai did not so badly. With 7 of 46 elected the Tōhōkai had a success rate of around 15% which is more or less the same as that of all other non-endorsed candidates, where 85 out of 551 were elected (again with a 15% success rate). By comparison, of the 466 endorsed candidates 381 won seats in the Diet yielding a success rate of around 80%.

<sup>36</sup> The veterans who had run for re-election were Nakano Seigō [中野正剛], Watanabe Yasukuni [渡辺泰邦], Ōishi Masaru [大石大], Kimura Sakuo [木村作雄], Tanaka Kiyotatsu [田中養達], Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], and Sugiura Takeo [杉浦武雄].

<sup>37</sup> The reaction is recorded by Honryō Shinjirō and quoted in Inomata, p. 487-88.

energies into the raising of talent and cooperating with the execution of the Greater East Asian War,” leaving “all political questions to be dealt with by the Yokusan-Seiji-kai.”<sup>38</sup> The party also changed its name to Eastern Brethren Society or Tōhō-Dōshi-kai [東方同志会]. After fighting so hard and paying such a high price to maintain its independence during the election, surrendering the Tōhōkai’s status as a political entity must have humiliated Nakano, who never had been a good loser. The party faithful also reacted negatively. Nakano tried soothing his followers’ dissatisfaction by explaining that the party’s spirit remained unbroken despite the change in its legal status:

“The driving force behind the Tōhōkai movement is the Tōhōkai spirit, and this spirit is without color or shape, just like the wind of spring that fills everything between the heaven and the earth. It is an indestructible entity that you cannot cut with a blade and cannot control with might.”<sup>39</sup>

In private conversations, however, Nakano’s assessment was much bleaker. Speaking to his follower Honryō Shinjirō,<sup>40</sup> Nakano said: “It is said that ten years are full of ups and downs, but in my case it is more like ten years full of downs and yet more downs.”<sup>41</sup> And downhill it continued to go for the Tōhō-Dōshi-kai. Even though many of the core members remained active in the newly created think tank, the rank and file throughout the country left the party in droves. Over the course of 1942, party membership fell 159% to 9,875 from 25,547 as chapters dropped 56% to 73 from 114.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Nakano Seigō, Declaration issued May 23, in “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, June, 1942, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> Honryō Shinjirō [本領信治郎] (1903–1971), German expert and politician.

<sup>41</sup> See Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku* [東大陸], July, 1942. For the dialogue with Honryō see Nakano Yasuo vol. 2, p. 637.

<sup>42</sup> See Nagai Kazu [永井和], “The Founding of the Tōhōkai”, p.133

## The War's Tide Turns

Japan's impressive string of victories during the Pacific War's initial stages soon gave way to a series of setbacks. The naval engagement at Midway, where the Imperial Japanese Navy lost not only the backbone of its aircraft carrier fleet but also many of its best pilots, was the first major setback. But while Midway was a tragic tactical blunder, the outcome of the battles of the Coral Sea, and, later in the year, the disastrous Guadalcanal campaign, arose from Japan's inferior strategic position. With command of the air increasingly dominated by America and Japan's production capacity just a fraction of the US's, supplying front-line Japanese soldiers with the arms to wage war became increasingly difficult. No matter how much the front-line soldiers tried to make up for shortages through self-sacrificing displays of the Yamato spirit, inferior weapon quantity and quality remained the single most important factor behind Japan's deteriorating military situation and eventual defeat. Those in informed government circles realized sometime in 1942 that Japan would lose the war unless it could increase production of war-related goods dramatically. The government reacted to this challenge by increasing production, preparing the public for a long-term war of attrition and emphasizing the role of morale while restricting news of military setbacks and defeats to a bare minimum.

In contrast to the Japanese people, who were kept in the dark, Nakano, through his acquaintances and friends in the armed services, learned relatively soon about the military setbacks. The first severe blow to his initial optimism came early in the second half of 1942, when he learned about the battle of Midway's outcome.<sup>43</sup> By the time he heard about Japan's Guadalcanal defeat, Nakano put the chances for a Japanese victory in the war at thirty percent.<sup>44</sup> From high-ranking bureaucrats Nakano also learned in early 1943 that the government's attempts

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<sup>43</sup> According to Yasukawa Daigorō, Nakano's financial backer, Nakano had come to the conclusion that the war was lost sometime after Midway. Yasukawa Daigorō [安川第五郎], "One or two additional remarks concerning Nakano" [中野君の追憶の一、二], in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], "Nakano Seigō is Alive" [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954), p. 98.

<sup>44</sup> See Hasegawa Shun [長谷川峻]; "The Master and the Yūkōkyō" [先生と猶興居], in Ibid., p. 29.

to increase materiel production by imposing a vast array of economic controls under the National Mobilization Law had been insufficient to make a decisive difference in the war's outcome. This led him to conclude that Japan could not win.<sup>45</sup> During his last visit to his hometown of Fukuoka early in the summer of 1943, a sobbing Nakano told his former teacher and mentor Shibata Fumishiro: "Japan will lose this war!"<sup>46</sup> From this sprang the imperative to act, which in Nakano's eyes meant informing both citizens and people in power about Japan's precarious situation and convincing them to join him in opposing the war and the government that waged it.

### **Sharing Information about the War**

Nakano's greatest obstacle in trying to mobilize opposition to the war, Tōjō's policies, and eventually to Tōjō himself was that few people around him knew what he knew and, accordingly, few shared his alarming conclusions. One of the recurring themes in Nakano's speeches and writings during this period is a demand that the government inform the people. Nakano often cloaked these demands in analogy – praising, for example, how Hitler had informed the German people of the defeat at Stalingrad<sup>47</sup> and pointing to the examples of Clemenceau<sup>48</sup>, or even

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<sup>45</sup> According to some accounts Nakano wanted Japan to propose peace talks as early as February 1942 at the height of its military successes. In a meeting with Navy officer and Tōhōkai member Nakamura Ryōzō, Nakano said: "This is the [right] moment to stop the war. Japan should declare a cease-fire to the entire world. ... Now [i.e. after our row of victories] they have understood our strength. Is that not enough? Japan should make clear that it has no territorial ambitions, and this is the only chance to settle this war." Nakano quoted in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?", p. 40-1. See also Mori Shōzō [森正蔵], "The Whirlwind of 20 Years" [旋風の二十年], (Tokyo, 1968), p. 317.

<sup>46</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 722-23.

<sup>47</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], *Tōtairiku*, April 1943, p. 4-6.

<sup>48</sup> Nakano's high esteem for Clemenceau can be found throughout his work, e.g. Nakano Seigō, "In the Middle of the Storm of the Global Restoration" [世界維新の嵐に立つ], (Tokyo: Tsuru Shobō [鶴書房], June, 1942), p. 139-142.

Churchill<sup>49</sup> and Petain, who had kept their citizenry informed of difficult situations.<sup>50</sup> While Tōjō likely understood Nakano's references, he certainly did not heed Nakano's advice.

Nakano therefore took up the task of informing the people himself. As talking or writing publicly about military developments, especially the outcomes of specific battles and campaigns, carried the risk of imprisonment, Nakano kept silent on these matters.<sup>51</sup> That did not stop him, however, from speaking negatively about Japan's dire military situation in general terms. In September 1942, Nakano wrote that "Japan will not be defeated, but subduing the enemy will not be so easy."<sup>52</sup> Two months later he said "even if we make extraordinary efforts in the long-term war, victory is not promised."<sup>53</sup> By December this tenuous pessimism had already become a more unequivocal "Japan is definitely in danger."<sup>54</sup> And when speaking to the students of his former high school in Fukuoka in the summer of 1943, he said:

"Young men, limitless hardship waits along the way ahead of you. The honor of those who manage to shoulder this hardship, however, is also limitless. Japan will continue to experience difficulties for at least another 30 years from now. Luckily, you are young and have flexible minds. You have inherited the grand spirit of your forefathers. You must deal well with the coming difficulties. If you fail, Japan will fall. Don't think –

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<sup>49</sup> Nakano's opinion on Churchill can be found in Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], *Tōtairiku*, January 1942 p. 12; November 1942, p. 11; and August 1943, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> After learning about the defeat at Midway and noticing how the Japanese government kept quiet, Nakano wrote a piece on how well General Petain had dealt with France's defeat against Germany in 1941, informing his country men of the situation and thus enabling the French nation to live through this dark hour. Nakano did not know of the French exile government under De Gaulle in London. See Nakano Seigō, "Editorial: Frank Advice to Japan's Youth" [時論：日本青年に苦言す], in *Tōtairiku*, July 1942, p. 2-3.

<sup>51</sup> Nakano once mentioned in his own house to two of his followers the little he knew of the outcome of the battle of Midway and Guadalcanal, and this was promptly included among the many charges made when he was arrested in the fall of 1943.

<sup>52</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, September, 1942, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Editorial" [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, November, 1942, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Nakano Seigō in his last public speech held at Hibiya Public Hall on December 21, 1942 quoted in Inomata, p. 515.

even in your dreams – about riding opportunities and living an easy and happy life. You share your soul with the Gods.”<sup>55</sup>

Nakano, however, was not content with simply making general comments about Japan’s gloomy situation. Two tactics helped him say more without risking censorship. First, he used historical analogy to explain Japan’s situation and warn against the dire consequences of incapable government. Second, he combined the information supplied by the government with common-sense analysis. The unpleasant conclusions he derived through these two methods were both revealing to his audience and threatening to the government.

Nakano had often used historical analogies in his writings and speeches, but as war-time censorship became stricter, he perfected the art. His lecture series on Hideyoshi, held in the second half of 1942 at the Tōhō-Dōshi-kai’s private academy, the Shintōjuku, can be read as critique of contemporary Japan by historical analogy. In his description of Hideyoshi’s life, Nakano concentrated on the two Korean invasions and argued that military defeat had been a function not only of the guerilla war waged by the Korean population but also of Japan’s inability to supply its troops on the mainland properly. Likewise, Nakano used the fall of Osaka castle (the stronghold of Hideyoshi’s forces) as a metaphor to warn against Japan’s coming fall. Warning that the castle had fallen for political, not military, reasons, he noted: “When a country perishes, we remember only the moment when the country was destroyed militarily. But the fall of a country is not a matter of a single day - it springs from different origins.” It is unlikely that the analogies to contemporary Japan’s situation were lost on Nakano’s audiences, or on the 70,000 who bought the lecture transcripts after they were published in the spring of 1943 under the title “Taikō Hideyoshi.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2 p. 724.

<sup>56</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Taikō Hideyoshi” [太閤秀吉], (Tokyo, 1943), p. 397-98.



Inspired by this success, Nakano prepared a second lecture series in 1943 on the topic of the Kenmu Restoration, which according to Nakano had failed because the Emperor Go-Daigo had surrounded himself with self-serving sycophants. Nakano's interpretation has been read as a critique of the Imperial Diet's role in supporting the Tōjō government's establishment of almost dictatorial power over Japan. Nakano also employed historical analogy in his 1943 *Asahi News* New Year's editorial, which so enraged Tōjō that it marked a tipping point in Tōjō's efforts to censor Nakano. After the editorial's publication, Tōjō had Nakano's writing effectively banned.

### **To Raise the Realm Alone**

Historical analogy, however, left the conclusions unspoken. To arrive at a more explicit critique, Nakano often supplemented his historical references with a common-sense analysis of information provided in the media. Nowhere did he do this more brilliantly than in a lecture held at his alma mater, Waseda, on November 10, 1942. Some consider this speech, titled "To Raise the Realm Alone," Nakano's masterpiece.<sup>57</sup> It contained many elements he had already developed in his lecture on Hideyoshi, but, more important, it also contained his ideas on the economic dimensions of a long-term war of attrition - an issue over which he had clashed with Kishi Nobusuke, Minister of Trade and Industry in the Tōjō cabinet, just one month earlier.

On October 10, 1942, Nakano, Kishi and a representative of the Ministry of Finance (the minister himself was sick that day) had attended a symposium organized by the *Teito Daily News* [帝都日日新聞] on the execution of a long-term war. Nakano was scheduled to speak second, after the Ministry of Finance official and before Kishi, but when he tried to step down from the speaker's stand to give the word to Kishi, the enthusiastic audience demanded that he "Speak more!" Some pleaded with him to "please continue" while others shouted "Who cares about

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<sup>57</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 645 but also Inomata p. 498.

Kishi?” [岸なんかどうでもいいぞ].<sup>58</sup> Eventually, it was decided that Kishi would deliver his speech as planned, but that afterward Nakano would speak again, affording him the chance to listen to Kishi’s speech before shredding it to pieces. Fired up by the enthusiastic audience, Nakano spoke the entire evening until 10:30 p.m. Cheering crowds surrounded his car when he left the building. Realizing that he had touched a nerve, Nakano made economic controls the heart of his speech at Waseda a month later.<sup>59</sup>

The starting point of Nakano’s Waseda speech was the contention that Japan was engaged in a long-term war – a feasible if undesirable position against a weaker opponent, but “absolutely not desirable” against stronger ones such as England or America.<sup>60</sup> According to Nakano, the conflict was a war of attrition that “the US will win in the end, thanks to their superior production capacity.”<sup>61</sup> The conclusion that the war would be decided by the combatants’ economic and industrial strength, not by spirit, brought Nakano into direct conflict with Japan’s military and civilian bureaucracies, which increasingly stressed the role of morale in the war’s execution.

Nakano had ridiculed spiritual mobilization when it was still a minor issue in 1939, writing: “Someone who feeds his wife and children and sends his son off to war does not feel the need to be ‘spiritually mobilized’ by a public official.”<sup>62</sup> As Japan’s military leaders boasted about the infantry’s “human bullet” frontal attacks [肉弾] and Japanese pilots’ ramming tactics [体当たり戦術] as examples of the Yamato spirit, Nakano countered:

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<sup>58</sup> All quotes taken from Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 635.

<sup>59</sup> A summary of Nakano’s speech can be found in the “Editorial” [時論], *Tōtairiku*, November 1942, p. 4-15.

<sup>60</sup> Nakano Seigō “To Raise the Realm Alone” [天下一人もって興る], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1942, p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Editorial” [時論], in *Tōtairiku*, January 1939, p. 4-5.

“When the sword I wield meets the sword of the enemy and my sword breaks, what will happen? I cannot win on account of my spirit alone. ... They say that we should thank our soldiers at the front, that we should think about our soldiers at the front, but it is not enough to merely say these emotional phrases. ... We must also supply them with the newest quality weapons in ever greater quantities.”<sup>63</sup>

Having debunked spirit as the decisive factor in a long-term war, Nakano then claimed to reveal the reasons behind the government’s stress on spiritual mobilization - obscuring the failure of their economic policies and their failure to increase armament production to the degree necessary:

“What stands out these days is that the statements made by the authorities suddenly all have taken on a spiritual tone. ... The Minister of Industry and Commerce, Kishi, says similar things. He has implemented almost all the directives possible under the purview of the National Mobilization Law. ... And now he says: ‘All we need from here on after is spirit.’ The implication being that the people have insufficient spirit.”<sup>64</sup>

To which Nakano countered: “If the government ... with its absolute power has carried out all its policies and the results are not as expected, then it is the government’s spirit that needs to be re-examined.”<sup>65</sup>

Having let the air out of the government’s stress on spiritual mobilization, Nakano redirected his attention to the more pressing issue of economic and industrial mobilization and the government’s mistakes therein. His critique was twofold. First, he used examples from Japan’s lumber, produce and housing industries to show how government controls had produced inefficiencies and waste.<sup>66</sup> Second, he took issue with Kishi’s ideological position, in particular a

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<sup>63</sup> Nakano Seigō “To Raise the Realm Alone” [天下一人もって興る], quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 681.

<sup>64</sup> Nakano Seigō “To Raise the Realm alone” [天下一人もって興る], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1942, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Thanks to his frequent trips through Japan’s country side and thanks to his many party followers all over Japan, Nakano had access to information about the failed government’s policies in those three

statement made during the symposium a month earlier when Kishi had said that Japan's war against England and America was simultaneously a war against capitalism, Judaism and the Anglo-Saxon ideology of profit-making. Kishi had contrasted these foreign ideologies with Japan's ideology of serving the emperor and nation. Nakano retorted: "Long before being exposed to the influence of England and America, Japan knew profit-making," listing the names of famous Tokugawa merchants to support his point.<sup>67</sup> He asked: "What is wrong with liberalism? Nothing is wrong with it. It is the decadence of liberalism that is wrong. It is absolutely all right to stand up against the oppression of a bad administration and assert the sacredness of the individual, and demand individual freedom."<sup>68</sup>

Then he launched a counterattack against the new bureaucrats in general, and Kishi in particular, denouncing them as socialists intent on creating an economic system that "combines the worst of liberalism with the worst of socialism."<sup>69</sup> Unlike liberalism, which if left unchecked would result in the most able businessmen creating efficient monopolies, heavy socialist interference in the economy would result in sub-par businessmen with good administration connections creating inefficient monopolies – far worse for the economy as a whole. Once again Nakano supported this point with Germany's WW1 experience, and further claimed: "Socialism has evolved from liberalism. It is a form of politics that enslaves the stupid masses and kills the sacred freedom of the individual."<sup>70</sup>

Some writers have mistakenly taken Nakano's defense of liberalism and capitalism as a signal of his rejection of Fascism and Nazism. Nakano continued to believe that fascism and

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industries. Information on the lumber industry, for example, was supplied by Tōhōkai member Hirano Saburō [平野三郎] who ran a lumber business. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 666.

<sup>67</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 653.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 659.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 669.

totalitarianism (as he understood them) represented a third way, a synthesis evolved from liberalism and socialism, and that Japan should adopt these ideologies rather than the left-leaning socialist ideas of the new bureaucrats. Completely misunderstanding the nature of Nazism, Nakano told his student audience: “Hitler rejects social-democratic totalitarianism and is a kind of individualist who upholds the value of the individual.”<sup>71</sup> Nakano added:

“Totalitarianism does not destroy the individual. By paying respect to individuality, it moves the total. Social democracy suppresses individuality; it gathers people who spiritually and intellectually have no leg to stand on and with quantity tries to control quality.”<sup>72</sup>

Having displayed such a tremendous lack of understanding of the Nazi totalitarian regime’s disrespect for the individual, Nakano recommended that the Waseda students read Hitler’s “Mein Kampf,” if possible in the original German version.<sup>73</sup> One can only wish that he had done so himself more closely.

Nakano ended his speech with a dire prediction about Japan’s future. Referencing an Imperial Navy officer’s quote that “this war is about eating or being eaten,” Nakano warned his student audience that “It is not just about eating. It is a war in which we may also be eaten. This is no joke.”<sup>74</sup> A passionate appeal followed: “The giant ship of Japan is sailing through troubled waters. It is dangerous to load it to its full capacity with opportunists. Wake up! Stand up alone and pull the realm along [天下一人以て興れ！]. This is what I most sincerely hope from you, my dear students.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 676.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 682.

<sup>74</sup> Nakano Seigō “To Raise the Realm Alone” [天下一人もって興る], in *Tōtairiku*, December 1942, p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 684.

### **Nakano's Last Public Speech**

The speech at Waseda was not only Nakano's best, but also one of his last (leaving aside speeches given in the Diet). He spoke publicly once more on December 21, 1942, commemorating the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Pacific War. Aware of the critical content of Nakano's speech at Waseda in November, the authorities issued permission to hold the rally only after Mitamura Takeo had promised that "this time we won't attack the government."<sup>76</sup> The authorities warned, however, that any such attack would see the rally stopped and the audience dismissed. On the day of the rally, though the speech did not start until 1 p.m., queues of attendees started forming by 6 a.m. In the end, only 4,000 of the more than 10,000 wishing to hear Nakano were let into Hibiya Public Hall. Somewhere between six and eight thousand followed the speech over a speaker system outside.

When preparing the speech - entitled "Formation of a People's War Camp!" [国民の必勝陣を結成せよ！] - Nakano had largely ignored the government's warnings. The content roughly mirrored that of the Waseda speech, except that in adapting it to a non-academic audience, Nakano excised the more philosophical elements. In their place, he emphasized the strategic questions of increasing production, replacing transport shipping lost to enemy action, delivering war-related goods to the front lines, and the government's information policy.<sup>77</sup> Stylistically, the speech was also more pugnacious, and where the Waseda audience had listened silently, the Hibiya Public Hall crowd responded frenetically. Nakano ended the speech by proclaiming "Japan is absolutely in danger." Describing the Tōjō government as a "slave system" and

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<sup>76</sup> Mitamura quoted in Inomata p. 512.

<sup>77</sup> Through Yamashita Kamesaburō, Tsuda Shingo and Hinoshita Tōgo Nakano had been informed about the staggering losses of Japan's merchant fleet, the desolate state of its economy and the appalling consequences these two factors had for the lives of front-line soldiers.

demanding that the people “stand up”<sup>78</sup> against it was, as Ogata put it: “a declaration of war against the Tōjō cabinet.”<sup>79</sup>

Though the authorities had warned Nakano that they would interrupt the rally if he criticized the government (a direct phone line between the monitoring officers and the police station had been put up just for this purpose), faced with the hall’s bloodthirsty crowd they did not dare warn, let alone stop, Nakano. That does not mean, however, that the authorities remained inactive. Irritated by the speech’s content and alarmed by the crowd’s reaction, the government decided to withhold future public-speaking permits, thus ending Nakano’s public speechmaking and mass agitation.<sup>80</sup> Nakano’s past political activities had rested on two pillars: his writing and his speeches. The government’s move clipped the latter and a clipping of the former followed soon.

### **The New Year’s Editorial in the Asahi News**

At the end of 1942, the editors of the *Asahi News* approached Nakano to write the New Year’s editorial for the paper’s January 1 issue. After spending a week or so contemplating different ideas, he finally wrote the editorial on December 31 in about 40 minutes.<sup>81</sup> Entitled “Wartime Prime Ministers” [戦時宰相論], the piece outlined the characteristics Nakano believed necessary for a wartime leader:

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<sup>78</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Inomata p. 512-15.

<sup>79</sup> Ogata, p. 45.

<sup>80</sup> Mitamura who was responsible for obtaining the permits to hold speeches recalls how he was informed by the official in charge at the Ministry of the Interior that “in the future you are not to appear at public speeches or lectures. Especially you, Mitamura, and Nakano are not to appear. If you apply for the permission to hold a speech rally at which either you or Nakano appear, the permit will not be granted no matter where the speech is to take place. Let us be clear about this point. Moreover, any speech held under the auspices of the Tōhōkai, no matter where it is to be held, will not receive permission. We do not prohibit the activities of the Tōhō-Dōshi-kai and therefore it may continue in its present form....” Quoted in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?”, p. 49.

<sup>81</sup> See Ogata, p. 46.

“The qualification for a wartime leader is absolute strength. War is the most violent form of struggle on a grand scale. In war, weakness is a sin. Countries are not destroyed through economics or through military defeat, but because the leaders lack self-confidence and the people are confused about the natural course of events.”<sup>82</sup>

Nakano elaborated: “In order to be strong, [the leader] must be loyal, moderate, honest, and magnanimous.”<sup>83</sup> Since “there are limits to the strength of an individual,” Nakano continued, “for the Prime Minister to become really strong, he has to become one with the burning patriotism of the people, stirring it up at times.”<sup>84</sup> Nakano illustrated his point with various historical examples, praising Clemenceau’s and Lenin’s determination to continue the war and condemning Germany’s leaders during WW1 for being out of touch with the people. Historical examples from Asia’s experience included Katsura Tarō, who led Japan during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 and, especially, Chu-ko Liang<sup>85</sup> minister of the state of Shū during the Three-Kingdom Period, which Nakano dubbed “a classical example of a minister in a time of emergency.” Nakano wrote:

“Chu-ko Liang led his soldiers like a god and looked upon the people like a merciful father. ... He did not seek a false reputation, nor did he pretend to be a hero, but instead he mobilized the people on behalf of his lord. While carrying the entire responsibility for the nation, he avoided gaining glory ... about himself he would only say: ‘The ministers of the former Emperor knew self-restraint.’ [先帝臣が謹慎なるを知る] ... He had self-restraint [謹慎], which is why in his private life he was pure and simple.

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<sup>82</sup> Nakano Seigō “War-time Prime Ministers”, [戦時宰相論], *Asahi News* January 1, 1943, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 697.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 699.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 697.

<sup>85</sup> Chu-ko Liang (Zhu-ge Liang) [諸葛亮] (181-234) also known as K’ung-ming (Kong-ming) [孔明], minister in the state of Shū [蜀] during the period of three kingdoms. The other two kingdoms were the state of Wêi (Wei) [魏] and the state of Wu [吳].



...Since he was loyal, he had self-restraint, and since he had self-restraint he had integrity.”<sup>86</sup>

Nakano then showed how these characteristics informed Chu-ko Liang’s actions and were reflected in his policies:

“When he met defeat in war, he did not hide [the truth] from the people, but made everything from beginning to end public. Criticizing himself, he asked the realm for understanding and advice. It is recorded that paradoxically this lifted morale and made the people forget defeat. ...While he had prepared himself for a long-term war, he thought of a hundred schemes and never let a chance slip by to decide the war in a short battle. ... He displayed the same undefeatable character as Clemenceau or Foch.”<sup>87</sup>

This was the content of the editorial that Nakano submitted to Ogata, who in turn passed it on to the censor’s office. Since Nakano had not directly mentioned, let alone criticized, either Prime Minister Tōjō or a member of his cabinet, the editorial was returned from the censorship office to the *Asahi* without any alterations or corrections. And yet when Tōjō read it on January 1, 1943, he immediately called the Bureau of Information and had the sale of this issue of the *Asahi News* prohibited. It was too late, for by that time most of that day’s newspapers had already been delivered into readers’ hands, a fact that made the *Asahi* employees burst out in spontaneous shouts of “Banzai” when they heard about Tōjō’s reaction.

Puzzled – or pretending to be puzzled - Nakano visited the Information Bureau’s censorship office to inquire why Tōjō had ordered the distribution freeze, but was unable to learn anything except that Tōjō had been furious. Ogata suggested that to “someone insecure about his ability for self-restraint and integrity, the text was like a dagger to the heart.”<sup>88</sup> Indeed, it is not too difficult to understand how, given the strained relationship between Nakano and the Tōjō

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<sup>86</sup> Nakano Seigō, “War-time Prime Ministers”, [戦時宰相論], *Asahi News* January 1, 1943, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 699.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 699.

<sup>88</sup> Ogata, p. 112-13.

regime, the article could have been offensive, especially Nakano's description of Chu-ko Liang. In Nakano's description of the state of Shū of the Three Kingdom Period as "narrow and poor in natural resources" and later of Chu-ko Liang leading his country in a "long-term" war against the two enemy states of Wei and Wu, no contemporary reader would have missed the parallels with Japan's situation in WW2. Likewise, when Nakano described how Chu-ko Liang, "did not hide [the truth] from the people when he met defeat in war but made everything from beginning to end public" and "criticizing himself, asked the realm for understanding and advice" which "paradoxically lifted morale and made the people forget defeat," it was equally clear that Nakano was criticizing Tōjō's handling of military information. Finally, Nakano told Ogata when submitting the editorial that he had been inspired by Chu-ko Liang's concept of 'self-restraint' and that "the gist of the piece is that we demand 'self-restraint' from Tōjō."<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, Tōjō was right in assuming that Nakano had meant to criticize his government. The central question surrounding this New Year's editorial is not whether it contained criticism, but rather why Tōjō chose to react in such a heavy-handed manner - and thus to lend credence to Nakano's criticism. Whatever the answer, Tōjō's reaction convinced Nakano that Tōjō's regime had to be overthrown.

### **End of Nakano's Career as an Author**

Just as the government's reaction to Nakano's December 1942 speech had effectively killed his public-speaking career, the New Year's editorial put an end to his published writing. The censors who had waved the piece through only to see it banned by Tōjō himself were now all too eager to ensure that Tōjō should never again catch them doing sloppy work. It therefore became increasingly difficult for Nakano to publish his monthly editorials in *Tōtairiku* without substantial parts being censored. Editor Hasegawa Shun, who was in charge of shuttling between

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<sup>89</sup> Nakano quoted in Ogata, p. 46 and p. 112-13.

the editorial office and the censorship bureau with the magazine's pre-publication drafts, recalled how on one occasion officials told him: "It has nothing to do with the text. We are not telling you to do this or that with the words and sentences. We have to obliterate Nakano as a human being."<sup>90</sup>

Nakano continued writing nevertheless, but the frustration at seeing his work crippled by censors discouraged him from engaging in any major project. The publication of "Taikō Hideyoshi" – his 1942 lecture series at Tōhōkai's academy – was Nakano's last success as an author. Produced under difficult conditions as paper was becoming scarce due to the war, the book nonetheless went through several reprints, eventually selling 70,000 copies. This success encouraged Nakano to prepare his second lecture series on the Kenmu Restoration. Because of the government's censorship, however, this second lecture series was not published during Nakano's lifetime.<sup>91</sup> The end of Nakano's speechmaking and writing activities did not squelch his opposition to the government. In the first half of 1943, he concentrated on opposition in the Diet, and when that failed he focused on the Senior Statesmen scheme.

### **The Special Amendment to the War-Time Criminal Law**

As the war dragged on throughout 1942, its consequences were felt not only in the form of food and other shortages but also in the form of ever-increasing government imposition on citizens' lives. Frustration with these deprivations mounted in various corners of society and culminated in the spring of 1943, when the introduction of the "Special Amendment to the War-Time Criminal Law [戦時刑事特別法改正案]" provided a rallying point for the opposing forces in and out of the Diet. On the pretext of maintaining public peace during wartime, the

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<sup>90</sup> Hasegawa Shun [長谷川峻], "Politics and Human Beings" [政治と人間], (Tokyo, 1960), p. 107.

<sup>91</sup> The lectures were published posthumously by the Nakano Seigō Society of Fukuoka as the first part of a series of selected works by Nakano. Nakano Seigō, "Nakano Seigō: Selected Works: History of the Kenmu Restoration" [中野正剛選集：建武中興外史], (Tokyo, 1953).

government proposed an amendment to the wartime criminal law, itself passed only a year earlier, which would label (and criminalize) various forms of political opposition as interference in the conduct of the war, thus providing the government a powerful tool for dealing with opponents.

One of the bill's opponents outside the Diet was right-wing activist Amano Tatsuo, whom Nakano had known since his days at the *Tōhōjiron*, and with whom he grew closer in the coming months. With the intention of “speaking frankly to Prime Minister Tōjō,” Amano had written a highly inflammatory article attacking the proposed amendment as a government attempt to use the war as an excuse to expand its powers. Accordingly he demanded that this “bill to change the form of government should be called the ‘dictatorial military government bill’.”<sup>92</sup> Amano's outspoken criticism of Tōjō earned him the government's enmity – the article was banned and its author arrested – as well as the respect and goodwill of Nakano, who approached Amano after the latter was released from jail.

Opposition inside the Diet, where the bill was introduced in the second half of February and delegated to a deliberative committee, was even more spectacular. Nakano's follower Mitamura Takeo, who served on the deliberative committee, questioned the bill for the better part of three days before rejecting it, saying “when a given cabinet tries to deal with opposition movements, or movements trying to disturb or change the policies of that cabinet, by using laws, then the government becomes like the *bakufu* ... this law would make the cabinet inviolable.”<sup>93</sup> Tōjō attended the deliberative council in the days before it was scheduled to make its decision, but, despite his presence, 11 of its 20 members opposed the bill, six demanded that it be changed and only three supported it without qualification. Tōjō then dissolved the deliberative committee

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<sup>92</sup> All quotes taken from Amano Tatsuo [天野辰夫]; “Japan's Noble Cause under the Kokutai – the First Condition to Winning the Holy War” [日本国体上の大義名分—聖戦必勝の第一要件], in *Ishin Kōron* [維新公論], March 1943.

<sup>93</sup> Mitamura Takeo quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 708.

without taking a vote and put the bill directly to the lower house, causing an uproar. Diet members Nishio Suehiro [西尾末広] and Hirano Rikizō [平野力三] gathered 171 signatures opposing the bill.

Nakano himself sought the support of Miki Bukichi, a former ally from his Minseitō days, and Hatoyama Ichirō, formerly affiliated with the Seiyūkai, in opposing the bill. Miki agreed immediately, but Hatoyama needed some persuasion, eventually saying: “In the end, we are the last survivors of constitutional government ... all we can do is to fight that evil law.”<sup>94</sup>

When the bill was scheduled to be discussed in the Diet that Friday, the three men took turns at the speaker’s stand, effectively blocking it. With Miki occupying the chairman’s chair, Hatoyama warned his colleagues that “the Diet has already stopped fulfilling its function. A Diet that is always in agreement [with the government] risks being a source of many evils.” Nakano followed, saying, “this government inside and out takes the shape of dictatorial politics, something that should be feared.”<sup>95</sup> Tōjō’s supporters tried pulling Miki off his chair, but he held on - clawing his fingers into the table until about 30 like-minded opponents came to his aid. Miki’s resistance enabled him, Hatoyama and Nakano to hold out for three hours, and the session closed without a vote on the issue.

Then, however, the parliamentarians left for the weekend – giving the government two days to have the military police ‘invite’ individual members of parliament to spend the weekend in a Japanese resort town, where they were convinced to vote in favor of the bill when the Diet met the following week. Before the bill was put to a vote on Monday, MP Mitsui Sakichi [満井佐吉] climbed atop his chair and shouted: “Those who vote in favor for this law have been bought by the government in Hakone and Atami. Anybody who has been bought does not have

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<sup>94</sup> Having been a member of the Seiyūkai, Hatoyama had been subject to Nakano’s biting criticism more than once in the past, which may account for his initial reluctance in cooperating with Nakano. Hatoyama quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 709.

<sup>95</sup> Both quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 710.

the right to participate in the ballot. Get out!”<sup>96</sup> When the vote was taken, however, there were only about 40 votes against it, enough to pass it in its original version. MP Sasakawa Ryōichi<sup>97</sup> wondered: “Where have all those 175 signatories gone?”<sup>98</sup> While Tōjō won this battle, Miki, Hatoyama and Nakano soon got another chance.

### Tea-Serving Sycophants

On June 15, 1943, the 82<sup>nd</sup> extraordinary Diet opened to discuss two government-introduced bills, one concerning food shortages [食糧緊急対策] and the other the control of businesses [事業整備].<sup>99</sup> Nakano, Mitamura, Miki, and Hatoyama decided beforehand to use this occasion to launch an attack against both bills, the subservient Diet and the Tōjō cabinet itself. Hatoyama spoke first, arguing that since both bills directly impacted the lives of the people, the government’s plan to pass them within three days should be rejected and that normal procedures should be followed. Hatoyama’s request was rejected by Yokusan-Seiji-kai director Kokawa Gōtarō [小川郷太郎].

Nakano spoke next. After expressing his disappointment about Kokawa’s decision to reject Hatoyama’s motion, he launched an all-out attack on the Yokusan-Seiji-kai- dominated Diet:

“When considering today’s political situation, the attitude of the leaders of the Yokusan-Seiji-kai as shown in the speech of Mr. Kokawa points to a fundamental and important problem in the running of the Diet. If you run the Diet according to the wishes of the government, then the Diet is all name and no content [有名無実]. Moreover, there is only one party in Japan’s Diet at present and that is the Yokusan-Seiji-kai. If the leaders of this single party concentrate their minds entirely on moving

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<sup>96</sup> Mitsui quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 711.

<sup>97</sup> Sasakawa Ryōichi [笹川良一] (1899-1995), right-wing activist and politician.

<sup>98</sup> Sasakawa quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol., 2, p. 711.

<sup>99</sup> Nakatani Takeyo [中谷武世], “The War-time History of the Diet” [戦時議会史] (Tokyo, 1973) p. 160-63.

according to the wishes of the government, then the Tōjō cabinet will turn entirely into a dictatorship and those in power will be surrounded by a gathering of tea-serving sycophants [茶坊主]. If so, even rulers with good intentions will be turned into insubordinate ministers and the country will perish. Japan's problems are the tea-serving sycophants of the political upper classes.”<sup>100</sup>

At this point, members of the house who felt - rightly - that an insult had been hurled at them rose in unison and stormed toward Nakano, who still stood behind the rostrum. Miki Bukichi, however, stood in their way, shouting: “Tea-serving sycophants, be quiet!”<sup>101</sup> Miki repeated his words when the house members tried to shout Nakano into silence. Amid the fray, Mitamura, Nishio Suehiro and others came to the three rebels' rescue, surrounding them with a protective wall of bodies.<sup>102</sup>

In the end, the outcome of the three men's defiant stance in the Diet was mixed. The press applauded them, writing that the tumultuous events were a “manifestation of the parliament's true function and not bad by nature. This Diet has to reexamine its original function.”<sup>103</sup> The two bills, however, passed as planned.

The reaction among the rebel MPs also varied. Nakano withdrew from the Yokusan-Seijikai in protest on June 21, followed by Hatoyama on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and four more members of parliament in the following days.<sup>104</sup> Miki emerged from the experience convinced that further opposition against Tōjō was futile and potentially self-destructive. Accordingly, he prepared to retire to his native Takamatsu to avoid the backlash he was sure would follow their affront. Before leaving, Miki tried to convince Nakano to follow his example and go into hiding, or at

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<sup>100</sup> Nakano Seigō speaking to the Diet on June 17, 1943, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 728.

<sup>101</sup> Miki Bukichi quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 728.

<sup>102</sup> The dramatic scene is recounted in Nishio Suehiro [西尾末広], “The Political Memoirs of Nishio Suehiro” [西尾末広の政治覚書], (Tokyo, 1968), p. 17-25.

<sup>103</sup> “A Tribute to the Wind of the Gods” [新風賦], in *Asahi News*, June 18, 1943.

<sup>104</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol., 2 p. 729.

least to keep a low profile, so he could fight another day. By now, however, Nakano's determination to overthrow Tōjō had hardened him completely. When Miki warned Nakano that Tōjō might destroy him and he could end up like Yoshida Shōin, Nakano replied: "I will become like Yoshida Shōin. ... You can become like Katsura or like Saigō Takamori; you may save your body and plan for the future, but Nakano Seigō is not a man to do such a lukewarm and cowardly thing."<sup>105</sup>

Nakano's determination to topple Tōjō meant he missed his last chance to achieve a sort of compromise with the Prime Minister when it presented itself in later weeks. Wishing to neutralize the threat Nakano posed, Tōjō made a feeble attempt to co-opt Nakano by offering him a government position. Through a middleman, Tōjō asked Nakano if he would be interested in becoming President of the Information Bureau, which, essentially, would have made him responsible for the government's propaganda activities. Given Nakano's oratory and writing skills, he might have gone down in history as Japan's Goebbels had he accepted the offer. Instead, Nakano "told him [Tōjō's middleman] straight and clear that the only way to find a compromise between me and Tōjō is for him to submit."<sup>106</sup> In retrospect, this was the final point at which some yielding on Nakano's side might have softened Tōjō's stance (and saved Nakano's life). After Nakano rejected his offer, however, Tōjō was forced to find another way to ensure that the tumultuous scenes of the 81<sup>st</sup> regular and 82<sup>nd</sup> irregular Diet sessions would not be repeated when the Diet convened in the fall. As the carrot had failed, Tōjō tried the stick. In the interim, however, Nakano staged one final assault.

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<sup>105</sup> Conversation between Nakano Seigō and Miki Bukichi quoted in Miki Bukichi [三木武吉], "Fight to the Death against the Tōjō Cabinet" [東条内閣との死闘], part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 14-16.

<sup>106</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?", p. 78. The entire episode is recounted in Kaneko Sada'ichi [金子定一], "Nakano Seigō as known by one soldier" [一軍人の知る中野正剛], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人]; 7 (4), April 1956, p. 94-97.



### The Senior Statesmen Scheme

Nakano's opposition to Tōjō thus far had been primarily directed against the Prime Minister's policies, laws and, on occasion, ministers, but the Senior Statesmen scheme Nakano promoted in the summer of 1943 aimed directly at bringing down the Tōjō cabinet itself. Nakano hoped to achieve this by working through the Senior Statesmen [重臣], an advisory group consisting mostly of retired Prime Ministers that also included the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal [内大臣] and the President of the Privy Council [枢密院]. Though this group had no formal foundation in Japan's constitution, the Senior Statesmen took over the role formerly played by the *genrō*, most importantly by suggesting Prime Ministers to the Emperor.

Given their historical influence in a Prime Minister's selection, Nakano hoped that the Senior Statesmen could also suggest that a Prime Minister retire. While this was without precedent and accordingly the chances of success were small, the scheme was not entirely without merit. Only a year later Tōjō was, in fact, brought down by the Senior Statesmen's pressure. The alternatives open to Nakano, moreover, offered even less hope for success. A parliamentary vote of no confidence - which had brought down past governments - was unthinkable given Tōjō's firm hold over the Diet. A military *coup d'état* was equally unlikely. And Nakano himself continued to dismiss terrorism as a means of achieving political aims. When one of his followers approached him with a plan to assassinate Tōjō, Nakano said: "Even if you kill Tōjō, there only will be a second and a third Tōjō to replace the first. Not only that, you will also provide the military with a pretext for imposing martial law. Therefore, you must not use terrorism."<sup>107</sup> Compared to these alternatives, the idea of having the Senior Statesmen pressure Tōjō to resign seemed an attractive, non-violent solution.

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<sup>107</sup> Nakano quoted in Nagata Masayoshi [永田正義]; "Remembering my Beloved Teacher" [恩師を憶う]; in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], "Nakano Seigō is Alive" [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954), p.81-82. According to Mori Shōzō, Nakano dismissal of terrorism was not as outright as this suggests. Given his connections to the Genyōsha he may have at least considered terrorism at one point. See Mori Shōzō [森正蔵], "The Whirlwind of 20 Years" [旋風の二十年], (Tokyo, 1968), p. 318.

### The Decision to Act

While it is unclear where the idea for the Senior Statesmen scheme originated, the catalyst for putting it into practice was a meeting in February 1943 attended by Nakano, Nakamura Ryōzō - a navy officer and the Tōhōkai's advisor on naval affairs - and two officials from the Cabinet Planning Board, Hinoshita Tōgō and his superior Tanabe Tadao.

Nakamura spoke first, relaying news of the defeat at Midway, during which many of the Navy's most seasoned pilots had been lost, and continuing with a bleak assessment of Japan's situation in the Pacific. Next to speak was Tanabe, who only recently had caused a major stir by writing an article highly critical of the government's management of the wartime economy. Tanabe had concluded his article, which was immediately censored, by demanding: "If after a year [in power] the Prime Minister and the economic minister in charge of increasing production have failed to do so, we can even demand that they commit *harakiri*, just like a general who has been defeated in battle. We do not accept any excuses in this matter."<sup>108</sup> During the meeting, he noted that the government's production plans were all based on figures "that were off by 20 to 50%" and that hopes that "the resources gained in the south since 1943 would make it possible to increase armament production" were equally illusory. Tanabe doubted openly whether "the Tōjō cabinet was qualified to wage a modern war" and concluded that Japan was bound to lose this one. Even though Nakano knew of Japan's dire situation before, having listened to their speeches, Nakano was visibly surprised and remained speechless for a while. Then he said: "Having heard you out, I cannot remain still. Let us rise to action and establish a strong political system."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Tanabe Tadao [田辺忠雄], "Precondition for Increasing Productive Capacity"[生産力増強の前提], in *Chūō Kōron* [中央公論], January 1943 quoted in Inomata p. 530.

<sup>109</sup> All the quotes are taken from Tanabe Tadao [田辺忠雄], "The Death of Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛の死], in *Tokyo News* [東京だより], February, 1958.

## Selecting Allies

Nakano tried in the ensuing weeks to win allies for this cause, and succeeded in enlisting the already-mentioned Amano Tatsuo. A lawyer by training, Amano had earned some notoriety as a right-wing activist for breaking up strikes (notably a strike at his father's musical instrument factory), as well as for his involvement in the 1933 Shimpeitai Incident and in the attempted assassination of Hiranuma in 1941.<sup>110</sup> Cooperating with Amano thus exposed Nakano to the risk of being associated with right-wing terrorism and losing some respectability. As this was a liability in the eyes of the Senior Statesmen on whose cooperation the entire scheme hinged, some of Nakano's followers advised him against cooperating with Amano. Nakano disregarded their advice both because he appreciated Amano's genuine opposition to Tōjō and because, in the fight against the Prime Minister, Nakano needed all the help he could get.<sup>111</sup> Amano thus became Nakano's main ally in executing the Senior Statesmen scheme.

Nakano and Amano tried recruiting other candidates to their cause, particularly Ōkawa Shūmei.<sup>112</sup> Though he declined, they did win Matsumae Shigeyo,<sup>113</sup> head of the civil engineering works department in the Ministry of Communications, whom Nakano had met when both served

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<sup>110</sup> Nakano had served as a witness in Amano's court trial following the incident. His testimony can be found in "Contents of Nakano Seigō's Testimonial concerning the Shimpeitai Incident" [中野正剛氏の新兵隊事件の証言内容], in *Tōtairiku*, September 1939, p. 117-121.

<sup>111</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 714-5. The mistrust that Nakano's followers felt toward Amano, was reciprocated by Amano's followers feelings toward Nakano, whom based on his past track record they believed to be lacking perseverance and determination. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 722.

<sup>112</sup> Ōkawa Shūmei later recalled: "I was pressured passionately to agree [to cooperate] with the movement for the installment of General Ugaki [as Prime Minister]. One day there was a phone call from Nakano saying that he had gotten hold of a chicken and inviting me to eat it with him. When I went over to his place, it turned out to be an excuse for in reality he wanted to talk to me about establishing the Ugaki cabinet. Amano was also present, and even though they left nothing untried to convince me, in the end I did not agree [to cooperate]. Listening to Amano I was impressed by his rhetoric and passion. The reason why I did not agree was that I knew Ugaki well, and he simply was not the person to perform such a stunt as leading Japan into peace in opposition to Tōjō." quoted in Inomata p. 566-67, quote taken from Ōkawa Shūmei [大川周明]; "My Impression of Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛の印象]; in *Kokuron* [国論], October, 1953.

<sup>113</sup> Matsumae Shigeyoshi [松前重義] (1901 - ??), bureaucrat and politician.

in the IRAA and there found common cause in their opposition to bureaucratic management of the economy. Since the Pacific War's outbreak, Matsumae had gathered the most talented engineers from different fields and ministries to conduct first-hand research by visiting factories nationwide to determine Japan's actual production capacity. Matsumae's findings, summarized in a 150-page report, were shockingly bleak: First, the armament plans published by the Tōjō government lacked any base in reality. Second, given Japan's actual production capacity, the country could not possibly win the war.<sup>114</sup> Third and finally, since Tōjō was unable to face these facts, he was unfit to lead Japan. Matsumae had his report mimeographed and distributed among the Senior Statesmen and the high-ranking naval officers. Upon learning of this report, Nakano visited Matsumae and convinced him easily to join the Senior Statesmen scheme. Thus, the group of conspirators – with Nakano, Amano, Mitamura, Tanabe, Hinoshita, and Matsumae at its core and others (e.g., Hatoyama Ichirō) ready to lend a helping hand from the fringes – was complete.

As the ranks of the conspirators swelled, the outlines of their scheme started taking shape. Roughly speaking, the idea was to present the information gathered by Tanabe, Hinoshita and Matsumae to those Senior Statesmen known to be critical of Tōjō, in hopes that the findings would spur them into action. The statesmen would then confront Tōjō during the one of the group's regular meetings, ask him to resign and propose General Ugaki Kazuo as the next Prime Minister. While the Senior Statesmen would work at the top of the political hierarchy, Nakano, Amano and their respective followers would prepare the ground for Tōjō's fall by distributing information among Japan's political elites that showed Tōjō's incompetence.

Putting the plan into practice was more complicated. First, Nakano had to decide who among the Senior Statesmen could be approached. Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Kido Kō'ichi, who had suggested Tōjō as Prime Minister in 1941, was dismissed immediately. President of the

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<sup>114</sup> A preliminary report prepared by Matsumae had been published under the title "Nihon Gijutsu-ron" [日本技術論] and the royalties from this provided the funds to expand and continue the research. A summary of his findings can be found in Matsumae Shigeyoshi [松前重義], "Diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Private" [二等兵記], (Tokyo, 1977), p. 17-23.

Privy Council Hara Yoshimichi [原嘉道] and president of the Yokusan-Seiji-kai Abe Nobuyuki were also discounted, as they were considered to be favorably disposed toward Tōjō. In the case of Hiranuma, the situation was trickier. A staunch conservative himself, Hiranuma was known to take a critical view of Tōjō's expansion of power, but both Nakano and Amano had alienated Hiranuma in the past. Nakano had insulted Hiranuma when the latter became Prime Minister in early 1939, calling him a “mummy of a horse from Korea” [朝鮮馬のミイラ].<sup>115</sup> Amano had been implicated in the failed assassination of Hiranuma carried out by members of his Kin'nō-Makoto-Musubi-kai. Accordingly, the conspirators focused their efforts on former Prime Ministers Konoe Fumimaro, Wakatsuki Reijirō, Okada Keisuke, Hirota Kōki, and Yonai Mitsumasa.

### **Karuizawa**

The task of convincing the Senior Statesmen was to be carried out in Karuizawa, a resort town outside Tokyo where the upper classes spent the year's hottest weeks. To this end Nakano, Amano, Hinoshita, Mitamura, and Matsumae left Tokyo at the end of July. Seeking to avoid raising the suspicion of the police or *kempeitai*, Nakano and Amano traveled with their sons, maintaining the appearance of a family outing. Soon, however, Nakano grew tired of worrying about the police and declared: “Unlike Amano and Mitamura, I am not good at paying attention to the military or the higher police and moving about like a spy.” Once they checked into their Hotel in Karuizawa, he went a step further, saying: “I don't like to conspire in the shade [陰謀], I like to conspire in the open daylight [陽謀].”<sup>116</sup> Given that the scheme ultimately failed because

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<sup>115</sup> Nakano quoted in Inomata p. 568-9.

<sup>116</sup> Both quotes taken from Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 735.

Tōjō got wind of it (though it remains far from clear how this happened), one wonders if a more secretive approach would not have been more sensible.<sup>117</sup>

Over the coming days, Hinoshita and Tanabe visited Konoe, Ugaki, and Hatoyama, while Matsumae visited Konoe. In each meeting, the conspirators presented their hosts with their findings on the state of the Japanese economy and their dire conclusions for the conduct of the war. They ended their presentation with a passionate appeal to inform the Emperor and have Tōjō dismissed.<sup>118</sup> Nakano appears to have been skeptical about whether the meetings would be sufficient to rouse the Senior Statesmen into action. At one point he expressed his doubts, saying:

“They are useless, those guys. They are like those mechanical toys. If you don’t wind them up, they won’t move. When I stand in front of them and talk to them they make a face as if they understood, but when I meet them the next time, the spring is all unwound. Going around from one to the other in order to wind up the springs of these puppets is back-breaking.”<sup>119</sup>

In spite of his doubts, Nakano and his fellow conspirators did not follow up their Karuizawa outing with further meetings and left it at that.

### **Mitamura’s Pamphlet**

Hoping that Tōjō would be toppled at the Senior Statesmen’s next lunch meeting, which was scheduled for August 30, Nakano and Mitamura left Karuizawa for Tokyo and busied themselves preparing the political world for the coming cabinet change. With Nakano’s help, Mitamura wrote a pamphlet, two thousand copies of which were distributed to members of the

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<sup>117</sup> If the *Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Police* [特高月報] is any indicator the authorities did not know what Nakano and Amano were up to. Neither the July, August or September issue make any mention of Nakano’s activities in Karuizawa.

<sup>118</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 736.

<sup>119</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?”, p. 56. Nakano’s doubts were echoed by Tanabe who after having talked to Konoe for four hours was still unsure whether or not he had gotten his point across. See Inomata, p. 569.

upper and lower houses, all state ministers, the members of the Privy Council, all newspapers and other leading intellectual figures. The pamphlet denounced the Tōjō regime as a “*bakufu*-like entity” that had been brought into power through the Diet’s servile cooperation. Mitamura castigated the Diet for waiving its right to deliberate and called the tactic of waving the government’s bills through the body “suicide.” Making the case for a return to open parliamentary deliberations, Mitamura wrote:

“No matter how superior a human being may be, he is never all-knowing or all-mighty. Accordingly, the policies of a government constituted of natural man are not necessarily perfect. It is only natural that sometimes it will get its timing wrong, make mistakes or embark in the wrong direction. The question is how can we ensure that misguided policies are as few as possible and that those few are corrected? ... In order to ensure that the mistakes are few and corrected, we have to open the way for criticism. When you don’t have criticism, you won’t have self-reflection, and where you don’t have self-reflection you won’t have improvement.”<sup>120</sup>

To escape police detection, the pamphlet’s 2,000 copies were printed in a single night on August 13 and shipped the next morning by mail. By the time the government banned the pamphlet, most copies had already reached their destination. Over the following days, Mitamura received more than 300 letters expressing sympathy with his views and encouraging him to carry on with his struggle.<sup>121</sup> Bolstered by their success, Mitamura and Nakano took a break from direct agitation to watch the results of their work unfold.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Mitamura Takeo, “The running of the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Association and the Constitution of the National Polity” [翼政運営と国体憲法], reprinted in parts in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?”, p. 70-72. A summary can also be found in *Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Police* [特高月報], August 1943, p. 30-31.

<sup>121</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 741.

<sup>122</sup> Nakano also attached some hope to the fact that Matsumoto Kenjiro [松本健次郎], one Nakano’s long-standing financial backers from Fukuoka and now head of the Coal Industry Control Association [石炭統制会], was to deliver a lecture to the Emperor on the impact of economic controls on Japan’s coal industry. Knowing Matsumoto’s dissatisfaction with the economic control regime imposed onto the industry, Nakano hoped that Matsumoto would use this opportunity to bring the Tōjō cabinet’s economic mismanagement to the Emperor’s attention. Matsumoto lectured before the Emperor on August 27, but failed to deliver the alarming message Nakano had hoped for. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 747.

### **Lunch with Tōjō**

Having been briefed, prepared and supposedly convinced of the need to topple Tōjō, the Senior Statesmen resolved to confront him during a lunch meeting on August 30. They did not know, however, that Tōjō had been warned by his mentor Kido of their intentions. Tōjō accepted the invitation, but instead of coming alone, he brought Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, Finance Minister Kaya, Navy Minister Shimada, and the President of the Planning Board Suzuki. Of the seven Senior Statesmen present that day (Wakatsuki, Okada, Hiranuma, Konoe, Yonai, Hirota, and Abe), only Abe continued to support Tōjō, but the contingent of serving ministers meant the pro- and anti-Tōjō forces were evenly matched with six on each side. Unprepared for such resistance, the Senior Statesmen did not progress far in their attack. Rather than driving Tōjō out of power, the meeting soon turned into a formal lunch.<sup>123</sup>

Nakano and his followers, who spent the afternoon waiting for the first news of Tōjō's fall, were shattered when they learned the Senior Statesmen lunch had yielded no tangible results. They realized gradually that it was only a matter of time until Tōjō retaliated against those who had dared to conspire against him. Mitamura at one point suggested to Nakano that they make preparations for their certain arrest and get "their stories straight." Nakano replied: "Mitamura-kun, you telling me these things is like practicing swimming on the dry land [豊の上の水練]. You and Amano can use these excuses, but I cannot do that. I have decided long ago what I will do if pressure is [applied to me]. I will not cause trouble to anyone, so don't worry."<sup>124</sup> While awaiting Tōjō's retaliation, Nakano poured his energy into a second try at realizing the Senior Statesmen scheme, which he hoped would save Japan – and himself in the last minute. He had not gotten far when Tōjō struck.

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<sup>123</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 743.

<sup>124</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Mitamura Takeo, "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?", p. 80



### **Tōjō Strikes Back**

On September 6, 1943, while attending a party organized by Nakano, Mitamura was arrested by the police. During the next weeks in custody, Mitamura was questioned by the Special Higher Police in relation to his mid-August pamphlet. He was then handed over to the *kempeitai*, which interrogated him regarding charges of breaking the wartime criminal law - specifically disturbing the government [国政変乱罪] - as well as charges that he had planned to assassinate Tōjō.<sup>125</sup> Thanks to his experience with interrogations – Mitamura had worked as a police officer in the past – he was able to avoid incriminating himself or others, but he was not released until January of the following year.

In retaliation against Mitamura's arrest, Suzuki Naotora [鈴木尚虎] and Koizumi Saburō [小泉佐武郎] from the Tōhōkai's Hongō [本郷] chapter posted about 50 posters in various Tokyo locations that read: "Shoot English Planes, Shoot American Planes!" [英機撃つべし! 米機撃つべし], but which could also be read as an appeal to assassinate Tōjō (the characters for English planes could alternatively be read as Tōjō's first name, Hideki.) Suzuki and other members of Nakano's student dorm had devised the plan without Nakano's knowledge. When he learned about it, he simply smiled, signaling his approval. After Nakano's arrest, this poster incident was also held against him.

### **The Mass Arrest of the Tōhōkai and the Kin'nō-Makoto-Musubi-no-kai**

In the early morning hours of October 21, 1943, the special higher police carried out mass arrests of members of the Tōhōkai, the Kin'nō-Makoto-Musubi-no-kai and the Dai-Nippon-

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<sup>125</sup> According to Kokushō Teruo [国生輝男], then corporal with the military police, the authorities had found a document showing that after the fall of Tōjō, Nakano had intended to become the next Prime Minister. See Kokushō Teruo [国生輝男], in *Weekly Tokyo* [週刊東京], October 27, 1956.

Kin'nō-Dōshi-kai [大日本勤皇同志会] headquartered in Fukuoka. Across Japan, 319 leading members of these societies were arrested and detained in various prisons.<sup>126</sup>

Though the Special Higher Police had monitored the societies for years, it had never seen any reason to arrest their members. The idea for the October 21 arrests came instead from Tōjō's inner circle, perhaps even Tōjō himself, as a way to ensure that neither Nakano nor Amano would attend the upcoming Diet session scheduled for October 25- 26, lest the tumultuous scenes of the last sessions repeat themselves.

The arrests were carried out on charges that the Tōhōkai had broken the wartime criminal law, specifically by disturbing the government [国政変乱罪]. Arresting a person on mere suspicion of having committed a crime, a so-called administrative arrest [行政検束] was well within the law's purview - at least for the many Tōhōkai members who were ordinary citizens. Nakano and Mitamura, however, were members of parliament and hence enjoyed a degree of immunity. Arresting a member of parliament was only possible when the Diet was not in session and required a proper warrant, which had to be requested by a public prosecutor and could be issued only by a judge. Being members of the government's judiciary branch, public prosecutors and judges enjoyed independence from the executive branch, and, much to Tōjō's frustration, the judges and prosecutors in charge of Nakano's case reminded Tojo of that fact over the following days. Unfortunately for Nakano, not all members of the Japanese administration displayed the same degree of professional integrity.

When Nakano was arrested early on October 21, he asked the police if they had a warrant. When he learned that they did not, Nakano surprisingly agreed to follow them to the police station anyway. In the following days, Nakano – perhaps unaware of the danger he was in -

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<sup>126</sup> Of those arrested roughly 110 belonged to the Tōhōkai. See *Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Policy* [特高月報], October 1943 issue, p.27 and March 1944 issue, p. 33. The following account of Nakano's arrest, interrogations, and suicide is based primarily on Ogata, p. 176-218 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 775-813.

maintained this chivalrous attitude of cooperative friendliness with the authorities. He offered to tell his interrogators all he knew, if they only told him what they were interested in, and more than once offered fruits he had received from the outside world.<sup>127</sup> At times, this friendliness took on arrogant overtones. Explaining his cooperative stance, for instance, Nakano said: “I am a politician and therefore there is no point in bullying low-ranking public servants.”<sup>128</sup> Overall, however, the approach seems to have served Nakano well, for after three days of interrogation he had yet to make a confession or implicate himself in a crime.

### **Nakano at the Kempeitai**

When on the evening of October 24 it became clear that Nakano, as a member of parliament, would have to be released the next morning when the Diet was scheduled to convene, Tōjō called an emergency conference at the Prime Minister’s residence. He invited chief prosecutor Matsusaka Hiromasa,<sup>129</sup> who first declined the invitation, feeling it would be inappropriate for a member of the judiciary to attend a conference of the executive. After being told that his superior, Minister of Justice Iwamura, would also be present, Matsusaka finally agreed. The conference was also attended by the Minister of the Interior, the superintendent general of the police, the head of the cabinet legislation bureau, the head of criminal bureau, and the head of the Tokyo *kempeitai*.

Tōjō demanded that the judiciary issue a warrant to arrest Nakano at least for the duration of the Diet session. Matsusaka replied that he could not request a warrant against Nakano without incriminating evidence or, better still, a confession. Frustrated by Matsusaka’s rejection, Tōjō repeated his request more forcefully, saying: “In order to win this war, the prosecutor’s office

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<sup>127</sup> These are only a couple among many more instances in which Nakano, Mitamura and other Tōhōkai followers displayed a not-readily-explainable degree of compliance with the police. See Ogata, p. 179-83.

<sup>128</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Ogata, p. 180.

<sup>129</sup> Matsusaka Hiromasa [松阪広政] (1884 – 1960), lawyer and public prosecutor.

must press charges against Nakano and somehow keep him from attending the Diet.”<sup>130</sup> Chief Prosecutor Matsusaka again stood his ground, repeating that he would need a substantial confession from Nakano before noon of the following day to arrest Nakano before the Diet opened. With this, Matsusaka left the meeting. Desperate for a solution, Tōjō asked the Chief of the Tokyo *kempeitai* if he would be able to obtain a confession from Nakano within the time given. The Chief answered in the affirmative.<sup>131</sup>

Four hours after the meeting ended, early in the morning of October 25, Nakano was transferred from his cell at the Tokyo police station to the offices of the *kempeitai*, where he was interrogated for much of the morning. By noon, the prosecutor’s office received a call from the *kempeitai* saying Nakano had made a confession and that the protocol would be delivered sometime in the afternoon. How the interrogators pressured Nakano to make such a confession and under what conditions – if any - he agreed to do so remains unclear, though some conjectures have been made. In one of the farewell notes he wrote before committing suicide, Nakano gave some vague hints about what had gone on his mind during the *kempeitai* interrogation:

“A decision of the moment  
words came one after another without stopping  
...  
I made all sorts of absurd statements, but I did not cause trouble to anyone.”

By and large this has been taken to mean that during the interrogations, Nakano made the momentous decision to kill himself. Once he had done so, he could comply with the interrogators’ demand for a confession while simultaneously protecting his followers and supporters. When Nakano was returned to the prosecutor’s offices in the late afternoon of the

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<sup>130</sup> Tōjō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 792.

<sup>131</sup> A description of the entire meeting can be found in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 792.

same day, he seemed exhausted. The public prosecutor in charge of his case, Nakamura, [中村登音夫] had “the impression that he had given up the fight out of sadness.”<sup>132</sup>

### **The Mills of Bureaucracy**

With Nakano’s confession delivered to the public prosecutor, Tōjō may have concluded the issuance of the warrant was now a mere formality and that he had won the fight, but he was still in for a surprise. While the exact contents of the confession are unknown (the protocol of the interrogation was subsequently lost or intentionally destroyed in the war<sup>133</sup>), the prosecutors soon determined that they were hardly substantial enough to charge Nakano with the crimes the *kempeitai* hoped to pin on him, including *lèse-majesté*, attempting to overthrow the government, or spreading rumors concerning the war.<sup>134</sup>

Accordingly, the public prosecutor, Nakamura, who was responsible for writing up the report requesting the warrant for Nakano’s arrest, was at a loss regarding what to write and the document was not completed until 8 p.m.<sup>135</sup> Before submitting it to a judge, Nakamura’s boss, chief prosecutor Matsusaka, had its contents presented and discussed in the presence of more than

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<sup>132</sup> Nakamura quoted in Ogata, p. 193.

<sup>133</sup> Tatamiya tried to shed some light on what happened during the interrogations at the *kempeitai* by directly visiting and interviewing the *kempeitai* officers in charge, but the answers he got were evasive and far from satisfying. See Tatamiya Eitarō [田宮英太郎], “Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛], (Tokyo: Shinjimbutsu Orai-sha [新人物往来社], 1975), p. 236-251.

<sup>134</sup> Of the various charges brought against Nakano, the most substantial one was that of having spread rumors concerning Japan’s military situation. Specifically, Nakano was accused of having told two students of his at his house in February 1943 “without any knowledge on which to base this that there are disagreements between the army and navy in carrying out the operations of the Greater East Asia War and that these disagreements have led to the disastrous results of the fighting at Guadalcanal, causing tens of thousands of casualties. Thus the suspect has engaged in the spreading of rumors concerning the army’s and navy’s military affairs.” While it is probably true that Nakano did exactly that, the rivalries between the army and navy could hardly be called a rumor, as they were commonly known facts and a information dropped within the four walls of one’s home hardly amounted to the spreading of rumors. Quotes taken from the Public Prosecutor’s request for the issue of a warrant for Nakano’s arrest, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 793.

<sup>135</sup> Nakamura report, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 793.

half a dozen other prosecutors. Though the majority concluded that the contents of Nakano's confessions were insufficient to request an arrest warrant, they decided that Nakamura should proceed anyway to appease Tōjō. Thus, the request was submitted to the night-shift judge, who studied the laws and regulations governing the arrest of members of parliament and came to the conclusion that no warrant could be issued.<sup>136</sup> He informed the prosecutors waiting in Matsusaka's office by phone around 10:30 p.m.; the written rejection reached them ten minutes before midnight. The judge thus successfully fended off Tōjō's attempt to use the executive branch's power to interfere in the workings of the judiciary. It seemed that the slow-grinding mills of bureaucracy had served Nakano well.

### **Raw Power**

While around noon on October 25 it had seemed that Tōjō had succeeded in keeping Nakano from attending the Diet session, it now appeared that Nakano had the upper hand. When, on October 26, Minister of State Ōasa [大蔵] attended a morning meeting at the Prime Minister's residence, Tōjō said that the prosecutors had failed to obtain a warrant for Nakano's arrest and then admitted defeat with the words: "I have lost against Nakano."<sup>137</sup> Ōasa understood this to mean that Tōjō had resigned and given up fighting Nakano.

The struggle, however, had entered only a new phase - one in which legal issues such as the immunity of a parliament member no longer played a role. Some hours prior to the meeting at Tōjō's residence, Nakano learned of the judge's decision not to issue a warrant against him. Preparations were made to return him home as soon as possible. His household's anxious members were told that he would return that night, but this never happened. As Nakano was

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<sup>136</sup> According to the judge there were two reasons. First, the arrest of a Diet member required the consent of the Diet, which could not be gotten before the next day. Second, the Diet would be legally in session the following day and hence the Nakano already enjoyed immunity. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 798.

<sup>137</sup> Tōjō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 800 and Ogata, p. 205.

accompanied from the prosecutor's office to the police station, the officer in charge made Nakano promise in writing that he would not attend the upcoming Diet session. Once they arrived at the station, moreover, Nakano was asked to spend the night there instead of returning home, under the false pretext that the police had been unable to contact his family.<sup>138</sup> When Nakano left the police building the next day (October 26), he found the Head of the Tokyo *kempeitai*, who had pressed Nakano to confess the previous day, waiting in his car. Instead of bringing Nakano home, the officer took Nakano back to the *kempeitai* headquarters for further interrogation.

Again, we do not know what exactly was said during the ensuing hours, but between educated guesses and conjectures the following foggy picture emerges. Nakano was informed that his release was only temporary and that interrogations would resume as soon as the Diet session ended. Whether Nakano was threatened again or whether the threats made the previous day were powerful enough to make him capitulate matters little. He seems to have given up resisting Tōjō and apparently offered, instead, to cooperate with the government in the future. Whether the interrogating *kempeitai* officer relayed Nakano's offer to Tōjō is unclear, but such a step seems unlikely. The same Nakano who a couple of months earlier had defiantly rejected Tōjō's offer to serve as chief of the information bureau now found himself asking for a second chance, only to be rejected with similar arrogance. If anything, Nakano's proposal shows how desperate or naïve he was to think that he could still negotiate with Tōjō. Perhaps Nakano had forgotten one of his own lectures on the history of the Kenmu restoration:

“When you are subject to political oppression, resisting it is the only thing you can do. If you submit, your opponent will only increase [the pressure]. The more vulgar he is, the more likely he is to do so. ... Strong oppression has to be met with strong resistance. Appealing to mercy and asking for moderation is useless. People who work as the

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<sup>138</sup> Mitamura who as Member of Parliament was in the same position as Nakano, was similarly kept overnight. See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2 p. 799.

servants of power only seldom show compassion for people. Only fear will make them reflect on their ways.”<sup>139</sup>

### Returning Home

Unlike the other Tōhōkai and Kin’nō-Makoto-Musubi-no-kai members, Nakano and Mitamura were “released” on the morning of October 26, because members of parliament could not be detained without a warrant. As we have seen, however, their release did not mean that they were allowed to move freely. Mitamura was accompanied by *kempeitai* officers to spend the next few days at a hot spring resort hotel before he returned to prison after the Diet session ended. Nakano was finally allowed to return home, albeit also accompanied by *kempeitai* officers.<sup>140</sup>

Nakano arrived home shortly after 2 o’clock on the afternoon of October 26. He introduced his family to one of the *kempeitai* officers with the words: “This is Mr. Kokushō [国生] from the *kempeitai*. He will be watching over me for the next three days. During these three days, tell anyone who calls me or visits me that I am on a trip, for I must not meet or talk to anyone. Only relatives are exempt.”<sup>141</sup> Clearly, the *kempeitai* wanted to ensure that Nakano would keep his promise and not attend the following days’ deliberations in the Diet. As before, Nakano tried to make the work of his guards as easy as possible by cooperating with them and respecting the restrictions they imposed. Before setting out to write some notes in the evening, Nakano asked

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<sup>139</sup> Nakano Seigō, “History of the Kenmu Restoration” [建武中興史論], (Tokyo: Seigō-kai [正剛会], 1953), p. 125.

<sup>140</sup> When the police officers released Mitamura on the morning of October 26, 1943, he had every intention of attending the Diet session. It was only when no less than four police officers suggested that he “take some rest at a hot spring” for otherwise he would put them “in a tight spot [それは困る], that Mitamura agreed to follow them. He then was asked to sign a paper saying that he had voluntarily decided to go to take a vacation, which he did after being told that Nakano had done the same. Over the following days, he was accompanied by at least one police officer at any point in time (Yes, even when going to the bathroom). Mitamura Takeo, “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide”, p. 15-16.

<sup>141</sup> See Inomata, p. 683.



the officers for permission.<sup>142</sup> When in the course of the day, first his riding instructor and later the head of the Tōhōkai Hongō chapter, Suzuki Naotora, came to visit, Nakano told them to leave at once. His friend Ogata was likewise told he could not visit Nakano for the time being. Some evidence, however, suggests Nakano did try to make two unauthorized phone calls during the day.<sup>143</sup>

Once home, Nakano made every effort to return to some sort of normality while keeping his suicide preparations secret. He spent the rest of the afternoon and evening doing things one would expect of someone who had just spent the better part of a week in jail. He first went to see his mother and talked with her for 90 minutes, trying to calm her worries. When he had a moment alone with his son, he told him: “It’s over. This time I have won. Tōjō has tried out various tactics but they all led to nothing. Now he is mine.”<sup>144</sup> Then he took a long bath, during which he shaved and dyed his hair. This was followed by an early, but for wartime Japan also lavish, dinner (somehow the students of his dorm had organized some beef, crabs and other delicacies to celebrate the occasion). Having eaten well, Nakano got up and lingered in the doorway, taking one last glance at his family sitting around the dinner table before retiring to his room.

Though his brother remarked that Nakano had behaved somewhat oddly that evening, no one sensed that he had resolved to kill himself. Nakano did everything to maintain that illusion. Though he knew he would not sleep that night, he asked the maid to lay out his futon. He also

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<sup>142</sup> Though casual in tone, Nakano’s statement: “I want to write something. I cannot show it to you, but it is not a letter.” must be seen as his requesting the permission to write. Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 809.

<sup>143</sup> Nobody in Nakano’s house noticed him making the calls, but the daughter of Honma Ken’ichirō [本間憲一郎] subsequently claimed to have received a call by Nakano asking to speak to her father. Since the latter was traveling through Japan at the time, she could not help Nakano. See Inomata p. 688 quote taken from Honma Ken’ichirō “Evict the Bureaucrats” [官僚追放], (Tokyo, 1952). Likewise, Mitamura’s wife said to have received a call from someone claiming to be Nakano and wishing to speak to Mitamura on an urgent matter. See Mitamura Takeo, “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?”, p. 17-18. In either case, Nakano’s attempt to make contact with the outside world failed.

<sup>144</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 807.

asked her to fetch the one sword the police had failed to confiscate earlier that week under the pretext that he wished to polish it. To ensure that he would not be disturbed while preparing his suicide, Nakano said he intended to be reading until late and asked all members of the house to go to bed early and not to worry or come into his room if they heard any noises or saw that the lights were still on at a late hour. In passing, he told one of the students staying at the dorm to tell Mitamura “not to follow my example.” When the puzzled student asked what Nakano meant, he replied with a smile: “He will understand when you tell him.”<sup>145</sup>

Once in his study, he completed his suicide preparations. He wrote 13 notes to family, friends and followers, which may be considered his testament. Apart from the one note mentioned above, which gives us some idea of what happened during the *kempeitai* interrogation, most of the others are of little interest. In one he expressed gratitude “to the Gods that I was given this last opportunity (to come home and say my farewell and find one last sword).” In another he bid his children farewell with the words: “As for my sons Tatsuhiko and Yasuo, I feel unlimited love and affection for you. Struggle through this war and live your lives.” Others carried only the names of the persons to whom they were addressed, without any other message, as if he trusted these people would understand even without words. These notes Nakano enclosed in an envelope with the instruction that they be given to his mentor, Tōyama Mitsuru.

Having written these official notes, Nakano also penned a couple of more casual ones, which he left on his desk. In these he addressed more practical matters: He asked that someone take care of his horses, thanked his driver and the family’s maids for their services, and told his family that they could refurbish the ceiling in his room if they wished. Finally, he left some notes that described the very act of his suicide, namely that the tip of the sword was blunt and that therefore he had tried to sharpen it using his pocket watch, “but to no avail. So I will tuck in my belly and try not to make a mess of it.” Nakano wrote that he was about to die with a calm smile:

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<sup>145</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 806.

“Looking on Japan, I become a Buddha.” This was followed by a request to his family: “Please do not be sad.” Nakano killed himself performing traditional *seppuku* - that is, by cutting his belly. To shorten the agony, he then also cut his carotid artery. His last note was comprised of four characters written on the back of his visiting card: “A cut at twelve o’clock [断十二時],” indicating the time of his first incision.<sup>146</sup>

### **Reaction to Nakano’s Suicide**

As Nakano had done much to hide his intention to commit suicide from his family, the discovery of his dead body early in the morning of October 27 – by the maid Suzu, who found him after following a trail of paper leading from the kitchen to his room – came as a great shock to his family and friends. Even the two *kempeitai* officers who had spent the night in the room beneath Nakano’s seemed surprised. After they reported the news to their superiors, the officers were told they could return to headquarters given that there was no more work to do (though according to Ogata there were still civilian-clad police officers around the house when he arrived there immediately after hearing the news).<sup>147</sup> Prime Minister Tōjō was among the few people not to be shocked by the news. In fact, he seemed rather relieved. On October 27, Tōjō told Ōasa Tadao, Minister without portfolio: “Nakano killed himself. It was good that we released him from prison. If he had killed himself at the *kempeitai* or at the Special Higher Police, what a mess that would have been. It would have taken more than just one cabinet. It was good to send him home according to the law.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> For a discussion of the notes see Inomata, p. 715-19 or Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 800-812.

<sup>147</sup> See Ogata, p. 39. It seems that police officers continued to swarm around Nakano’s residence for a number of days. Komai Tokuzō then Member of Parliament recalls how after hearing the news in the Diet on October 28: “I went to Nakano’s house, where I met Ogata and Kazami. They told me: ‘You can’t stay. The place is swarming with *kempeitai* and police officers in civilian clothing. Don’t say anything.’” Komai Tokuzō quoted in Inomata p. 742.

<sup>148</sup> Tōjō quoted in Inomata p. 800 but also in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 803.

These initial reactions were followed by universal admiration for the way in which Nakano had committed suicide. The fact that he had performed traditional *seppuku* as practiced by the warriors of old, that he had done so without an aide to cut off his head in order to shorten the agony, that he had used a blunt sword, and finally that he had done all this without crying out and waking up those around him, earned Nakano immediate and lasting respect. When Ogata informed Nakano's mother of her son's suicide, he ended by saying, "Nakano has cut his belly and died. It was a wonderful end [実に見事な最期でありました]." <sup>149</sup> Tōyama, who had accompanied Ogata on this task, added: "Because of your good parenting, Nakano has executed a wonderful death. This is a result of the way you brought him up." <sup>150</sup> Kazami Akira shared this view <sup>151</sup> and Ishiwara Kanji, upon hearing of Nakano's suicide, stated: "Nakano was a God." [中野君は神だったよ]. <sup>152</sup> A positive assessment of Nakano's *seppuku* survived the passage of time and even post-war Japanese commentators unanimously approve of his method. <sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ogata Taketora in "Nakano and Filial Piety" [孝子中野君] in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], "Nakano Seigō is Alive" [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房]; 1954) p. 50-51.

<sup>150</sup> Tōyama quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>151</sup> Nakayama Yū recalls that Ishiwara Kanji greatly respected Nakano for having committed suicide in such a noble way. See Nakayama Yū [中山優]; "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Kyōtsū no hiroba* [共通の広場], September 1952, p.50. Kazami Akira described Nakano's death as a "grand end." Kazami Akira, *The Diary of Kazami Akira* [風見章日記], (Tokyo, 2008), p. 225.

<sup>152</sup> Ishiwara Kanji quoted by Nakano Yasuo in Hinoshita Tōgo [日下藤吾], "The way of the Lion: Nakano Seigō" [獅子の道 中野正剛], (Tokyo, 1986), p. 44.

<sup>153</sup> Tanabe Tadao wrote approvingly that "Nakano chose the death of a Japanese samurai [日本武士]." Tanabe Tadao [田辺忠男], in *Tokyo News* [東京だより], February 1958. Comparing Nakano's suicide to that of Tōjō, who attempted to shoot himself and Konoe who took sleeping pills, Aochi Shin wrote in 1955 how positively Nakano's suicide contrasts with the other two and concluded that "Within Nakano's life, his *seppuku* is his masterpiece." See Aochi Shin [青地晨], "Nakano Seigō", in *Chisei* [知性], February 1955, p.150 and 159.

### Reasons for Nakano's Suicide

While the manner of Nakano's suicide has met with unanimous admiration in Japan, the puzzling question of why he committed it has not been answered satisfactorily.<sup>154</sup> The epitaph written by Tokutomi Sohō on the first anniversary of Nakano's death reads: "Nobody knows why." [人其ノ何故タルヲ知ル者無シ].<sup>155</sup> The fact that Nakano's suicide was a political act, and that therefore the motives and intentions guiding it were politically relevant, was recognized immediately by all involved – including Tōjō, who tried to suppress media coverage of the event. The political relevance of Nakano's suicide has resulted in continued interest in his motives, producing a stream of explanations that can be separated into two groups.<sup>156</sup>

The first school of thought holds that Nakano killed himself because he felt both responsible for Japan's military predicament and powerless to do anything about it. This is how most of Nakano's friends and benevolent observers explained his suicide when they heard the news without knowing all the details. Thus, after learning of Nakano's suicide, journalist Kiyosawa Kiyoshi [清沢洌] wrote in his diary:

"I hated him. It was his ideas that led to the outbreak of the war. Faced, however, with his suicide, I felt like forgiving him. ... He had publicly stated that once the war broke out, America would submit right away. That was, however, a mistake. Has he

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<sup>154</sup> Even those who put forward different explanations all agree that in the end the suicide remains an enigma. See for example, Aochi Shin [青地晨], "Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛] in *Chisei* [知性], February 1955, p. 151.

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in Inomata, p. 760 but also in Ogata, p. 17.

<sup>156</sup> Among the less convincing ones, this author counts an explanation by Nakano's horse-riding instructor, Lieutenant Yūsa [遊佐] who argued that: "If a famous sensitive horse is put together with a bad horse over a long period of time, it will die in anger. Nakano was among humans like a thoroughbred horse among horses, and hence could not bear to spend much time with impure people." Yūsa quoted in Inomata p. 754 but the same explanation has also been credited to Ogata see Kiyosawa, Kiyoshi [清沢洌], "Diary of Darkness" [暗黒日記], (Tokyo, 1990), p. 129. Equally unsatisfactory is an explanation based on a statement by Nakano who asked what he would do if he were sentenced to serve a prison sentence answered: "I have one leg. For someone missing a leg, being thrown into prison will cause hardship. So I will kill myself by cutting my belly." Nakano Seigō quoted in Inomata p. 754.

committed suicide after having self-examined [his responsibility]? If that is the case, it would be grand indeed.”<sup>157</sup>

While Kiyosawa still expressed doubts, Prince Higashikuni was more certain of Nakano's motives: “He felt that with all his power he had to help Japan somehow to break out of this deadlock, and yet he realized that he could not do this. I guess that he killed himself because he felt acutely responsible for this [Japan's situation].”<sup>158</sup> Many subscribed to this explanation in subsequent years, including Ōkawa Shūmei,<sup>159</sup> Tanabe Tadao<sup>160</sup> and most of Nakano's biographers.<sup>161</sup> Good evidence supports it. Nakano was aware of Japan's increasingly difficult military situation and he also admitted: “I feel entirely responsible.”<sup>162</sup> It is likewise clear that all of Nakano's attempts to alter the course of events were frustrated.

Still, this only partially explains Nakano's suicide. The feeling of responsibility combined with helplessness was a dominant motif throughout his last eighteen months and accounts for his criticism of the military and civilian bureaucracies' role in managing the war effort, as well as for his escalating opposition against Tōjō. It also explains his suicide, but only from a personal angle. We must also include external factors, especially the pressure exerted by Tōjō through the *kempeitai*, which took various forms.

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<sup>157</sup> Kiyosawa, Kiyoshi [清沢洌], “Diary of Darkness” [暗黒日記], (Tokyo, 1990), p. 102-04.

<sup>158</sup> Higashikuni Naruhiko [東久邇稔彦] in “War Diary of a Court Noble” [一皇族の戦争日記], (Tokyo, 1957), p. 122.

<sup>159</sup> Ōkawa Shūmei [大川周明] wrote: “There are probably many important reasons why Nakano killed himself, but the feeling of responsibility for Japan's defeat in his heart was probably an important factor.” Ōkawa Shūmei in *Kokuron* [国論], October, 1953.

<sup>160</sup> Tanabe Tadao wrote that Nakano “felt spiritually responsible for the war. ... and tried to apologize to the emperor.” Tanabe Tadao [田辺忠男], in *Tokyo News* [東京だより], February 1958.

<sup>161</sup> See Ogata, p. 11 and 18, Inomata, p. 757 but also Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 734.

<sup>162</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted by Nakayama Yū [中山優], “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Kyōtsū no Hiroba* [共通の広場], September 1952, p. 50.

First, it was made clear to Nakano that after the Diet session ended, the interrogations would resume. Through one of the officers guarding him at his house, Nakano learned that the *kempeitai* planned to bring him to a hotel after the Diet session was over, where his thought was to be “converted.” The prospect of further interrogations threatened Nakano in two ways. First, the *kempeitai* may have known or found some of the skeletons hidden in Nakano’s political past and could have used these either to indict Nakano or, at least, to attempt to destroy his political standing permanently. The *kempeitai* was following clues about contributions Nakano received from the German ambassador Ott in the time leading up to the conclusion of the Triple Alliance, as well as a monthly payment of 5,000 Yen that Nakano is said to have received from General Sugiyama, then head of the army general staff. This genuinely worried Nakano. On the day of his arrest, he handed all the cash he had in his house – some 300,000 Yen – to his son, with the instruction to give it all to Ogata. He added: “I don’t have a bad conscience about this money. The only thing I worry about is the 5,000 Yen I received from the General Staff.”<sup>163</sup>

Second, Nakano - who thus far had confessed “without causing trouble to anyone” - may have feared that he might crack in future interrogations and implicate those who had cooperated with him in the Senior Statesmen scheme. This has been argued by Kazami Akira, who received support from Adachi Kenzō, writing: “A polished man like Nakano would ... certainly talk if arrested.”<sup>164</sup> Killing himself was perhaps the only way to protect his supporters and allies in the struggle against Tōjō.

Rumors persist, additionally, that the *kempeitai* drove Nakano into killing himself. This is what Matsumae Shigeyoshi, one of Nakano’s aides during the Senior Statesmen scheme, believed when he wrote: “Nakano was not the kind of person to lightly choose to kill himself simply out of anger. I cannot help thinking that it was their plan [i.e. the plan of the people around Tōjō] to

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<sup>163</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 789.

<sup>164</sup> Both quoted in Inomata, p. 755.

force him to commit suicide. At first sight his death is a suicide, a killing out of anger. However, there was another violent force on the outside exercising pressure on him to kill himself.”<sup>165</sup> Indeed, the *kempeitai* officer responsible for interrogating Nakano on October 25 and 26 boasted after the war – in a drunken stupor – that “it was me who killed Nakano.”<sup>166</sup> Ogata claims that, in that sense, Nakano was killed by Tōjō.<sup>167</sup>

One is left wondering how the *kempeitai* could have pressured Nakano to take such extreme action. The threats of ongoing interrogations and of exposing Nakano’s financial sources were real but not necessarily sufficient. The threat of sending his remaining two sons to a front from which they would not return, however, may have made Nakano pliable. This, according to many accounts, is what must have happened.<sup>168</sup> Or perhaps it was as the NHK radio show, the “truth box” [真相箱], claimed after the end of the war:

“The last note that Tōjō sent Nakano more or less said the following: ‘You are a samurai, therefore I will give you the opportunity to kill yourself like a samurai. If you don’t put an end to your life by yourself, we will take care of it as we see fit.’”<sup>169</sup>

Presented with this choice and threatened with the prospect of both his sons being killed on some far-off island may ultimately have been enough to drive Nakano into suicide, especially since he himself does not seem to have feared death. Nakayama Yū after the war recalled Nakano

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<sup>165</sup> Matsumae Shigeyoshi [松前重義], *Diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Private* [二等兵記], Tokyo, 1977, p. 158.

<sup>166</sup> *Kempeitai* officer, Yokata Ryōji [四方諒二] quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 805. The interrogations at the *kempeitai* were carried out by Yokata Ryōji and Ōnishi Kazuo [大西和男]. It was Yokata who claimed to have driven Nakano into suicide, while Ōnishi later maintained that he was innocent. See Hosaka Masayasu, “Why Nakano Seigō was Driven into Suicide” [中野正剛はなぜ自殺に追い込まれたか?] in *Gentlemen* [諸君!], October 1983, p. 211.

<sup>167</sup> See Ogata, p. 48.

<sup>168</sup> Even more recent scholarship converges on this point. See Yagami Kazuo, “Konoe Fumimaro and the failure of Peace in Japan, 1937-1941” (London, 2006), p. 138.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?”, p. 101. The radio broadcast was made on January 18, 1946.



saying: “Death is not a big problem to me. My wife and children are just on the other shore of the Tama River, playing, eating their *bentō* boxes and shouting: ‘Daddy, come over here quickly!’ That is how I feel about it.”<sup>170</sup>

### **Nakano’s Funeral and the Meaning of His Death**

To those Nakano left behind, it became immediately clear that his death - like his life - was full of political meaning that now could be manipulated for political gain. Upon hearing about Nakano’s suicide, MP Saitō Takao predicted the news would “deal a considerable shock to all quarters.”<sup>171</sup> The Tōjō regime shared this view and quickly ordered that media coverage of Nakano’s suicide be kept at an absolute minimum. By and large the newspapers complied with the order, and even Nakano’s former employer, the *Asahi News*, was very matter-of-fact in its report.<sup>172</sup> A laudatory article written by Nagai Ryūtarō was subjected to so much editing that Nagai eventually refused to have it published under his name.<sup>173</sup> Thereafter, the government made every effort to erase the memory of Nakano.

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<sup>170</sup> Nakayama Yū [中山優], “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Kyōtsū no Hiroba* [共通の広場], September 1952, p. 46.

<sup>171</sup> See the October 27, 1943 entry in Saitō’s diary. Saitō Takao [斎藤隆夫], “The Diary of Saitō Takao” [斎藤隆夫日記], ed. by Itō Takashi [伊藤隆], (Tokyo, 2009), vol. 2, p. 507.

<sup>172</sup> Among Japan’s news papers, the *Asahi News* evening edition of October 27, 1943 gave most space to Nakano’s suicide giving it the greatest headline: “Mr. Nakano Seigō commits *harakiri* using a Japanese sword last night.” The article then stated in a matter of fact tone: “At six o’clock on the morning of October 27, at the Nakano residence in Shibuya-ku Honchō, the maid discovered the body of Nakano in front of the family shrine on the second floor. Dr. Maeda, chief of the Maeda hospital in Akasaka was called, but there was nothing he could do. The Yoyogi police station immediately sent a report to the Tokyo District Attorney which then dispatched head detective Matsuhiko and detective Nomura to the scene. After examining the body and the site they came to the conclusion that around midnight of the October 26, Nakano had killed himself by first cutting his belly and then his carotid artery with a Japanese sword. There was a farewell note. The grief-struck Nakano family was soon visited by Mr. Nakano’s brother Hidehito, his son Tatsuhiko, corporal of the 15<sup>th</sup> eastern army corps, Mr. Tōyama Mitsuru and Nakano’s father-in-law, Mr. Miyake Setsurei.”

<sup>173</sup> See Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?”, p. 4.

Among Nakano's supporters and Tōjō's opponents, the texts, acts and events that sought to keep Nakano's memory alive – such as his funeral – thereby became rallying points for expressing hostility toward Tōjō. The first forum in which this happened was, of all places, the Imperial Diet. After all the work and effort Tōjō had gone through to ensure that Nakano would not trouble him during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Diet session, it was ironic that Nakano's death should first come to haunt him in that very session. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, career bureaucrat Katsu Masanori,<sup>174</sup> formerly affiliated with the Minseitō and also a Fukuoka native, motioned that a message of condolence be issued. Thus, Tōjō - who had succeeded in banning all positive references from the newspaper reports on Nakano - now was forced to sit on the government's bench and listen to Katsu's laudatory description of Nakano's life and achievements, namely his literary talents, the broadness of his intellectual horizons and his "great contributions to the expansion of the popular will and the development of constitutional politics." Katsu described Nakano as "incorruptible, resolute and equipped with an indomitable fighting spirit and outstanding aspirations for the government of our country. He tackled all affairs with passion." Katsu finished his speech expressing his "deep respect,"<sup>175</sup> and his motion passed after great applause, which was both an acknowledgement of Nakano's achievements and a criticism of an embarrassed Tōjō.

Nakano's funeral followed. Before his death, Nakano had once told his lifelong friend Ogata: "Even if I were to die, I don't think that that many will come."<sup>176</sup> As Ogata set out to organize the ceremony – the fifth time he helped bury a member of the Nakano family<sup>177</sup> - he was determined to turn the funeral into a grand event, attended by as many people as possible so as to make it a symbolic posthumous victory of Nakano over Tōjō. Having restricted the media

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<sup>174</sup> Katsu Masanori [勝正憲] (1879-1957), bureaucrat and politician.

<sup>175</sup> For the text of Katsu's speech see Inomata p. 742.

<sup>176</sup> Nakano Seigō quoted in Ogata, p. 242.

<sup>177</sup> In the preceding years, Ogata had been in charge of the funerals of Nakano's father, his wife and his two eldest sons. See Ogata, p. 15-16.

coverage of Nakano's death, the government now tried to torpedo Ogata's efforts.<sup>178</sup> Ogata recalls:

“The government ... tried to keep the number of attendees as small as possible. ... They arrested all those Tōhōkai members who wanted to attend the mourning ceremony at the provincial train stations from which they wanted to depart. Then, they broadcast the news that the reason for Nakano's suicide was a case of *lèse-majesté*. The military as well as the student groups were told by the police that therefore it was prohibited for them to attend the funeral. ... They also tried to intimidate me because I was in charge of preparing the funeral.”<sup>179</sup>

It was only when it became clear that Ogata would prevail – in the end, more than 20,000 people attended the ceremony in central Tokyo on October 31 – that Tōjō decided to stop working against Ogata and made an attempt to capitalize on the event. Through his secretary, Hoshino, Tōjō inquired if the funeral committee would accept a wreath and some money for the bereaved family if it came from Tōjō. Ogata put an end to this by wondering aloud: “We will accept any wreath that comes with kind intentions, but isn't it somewhat strange to ask beforehand whether a wreath will be accepted or not?”<sup>180</sup> Snubbed, Tōjō never sent the wreath and prohibited the display of the over 30 notes of condolences that had been sent in from all over Japan.

Of the many who wished to speak at the service, only Tokutomi Sohō was allowed to do so - and only after expending great effort to persuade the Minister of the Interior. In his speech, Tokutomi praised Nakano's achievements and contributions to the nation, his passion, determination, patriotism, and sincerity, but skirted the issue of Nakano's suicide and the

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<sup>178</sup> According to Matsumae, Ogata was threatened from various sides not to get too involved in the funeral preparations as this would hurt both the *Asahi News* and himself. See Matsumae Shigeyoshi [松前重義], “Diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Private” [二等兵記], (Tokyo, 1977), p. 230-32.

<sup>179</sup> Ogata, p. 51. Ogata told Prince Higashikuni more or less the same thing when the two men met on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1943. See Higashikuni Naruhiko [東久邇稔彦] in “War Diary of a Court Noble” [一皇族の戦争日記], (Tokyo, 1957), p. 122.

<sup>180</sup> Ogata, p. 50.

government's role in it. Instead he stated simply that "Nakano has performed a grand suicide" and that "he must have had his reasons to believe that this was the right thing to do." Only toward the end of the speech did Tokutomi drop a veiled warning to Tōjō, expressing his hope "that the things I left unsaid will be told by another person some other day."<sup>181</sup>

The November 1st edition of the *Asahi News* described Nakano's funeral as a "fulfilling end and an adornment to Nakano's life." In the days following the funeral, people continued lining up to light incense at his grave. Journalist Kiyosawa Kiyoshi noted in his diary on November 1 that, "wherever you go, Nakano's death is the talk of the day."<sup>182</sup> Satisfied with the massive attendance at Nakano's funeral, Ogata rejoiced: "Nakano has vanquished Tōjō!"<sup>183</sup>

During the weeks and months following Nakano's death, things calmed down somewhat. The Tōhōkai was dissolved and while charges were pressed against some, most of those who had been arrested were released. In the end, only two served prison sentences.<sup>184</sup> Nakano's father-in-law, Miyake Setsurei, re-launched the *Tōtairiku* magazine in October 1944 under its former title *Gakan* (the same title it had carried until 1936). He continued to publish it until the editorial offices were destroyed in the March 1945 air raid.<sup>185</sup>

As long as Tōjō was in power, only Tōyama Mitsuru – protected by his age and his connections to the underworld - was able to publicly address the topic of Nakano's death. In late

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<sup>181</sup> Tokutomi Sohō quoted in Inomata p. 743-44.

<sup>182</sup> Kiyosawa, Kiyoshi [清沢洌], "Diary of Darkness" [暗黒日記], (Tokyo, 1990), p. 106.

<sup>183</sup> Ogata, p. 51.

<sup>184</sup> In order to make peace with Tōjō, Shintō and Mitamura informed the Minister of the Interior of the voluntary dissolution of the society in March of 1944. Of those arrested, only Nagata, Mitamura, Nagatani, Kiyomizu, Sugiura, Takagi were charged and tried mostly with breaking the law regulating free speech, publishing and association. Nagata, Sugiura, and Takagi were punished with fines ranging 50 to 100 Yen while Kiyomizu was sentenced to a half year in prison. Mitamura was still on trial when the Tōjō cabinet fell in the fall of 1944. He was later found guilty and imprisoned in Sugamo. Most of those who were not charged were released before the end of the year 1943, some to then be drafted into the army. See *Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Police* [特高月報], March 1944 issue, p. 33; April 1944 issue, p. 33, November 1944 issue, p. 34.

<sup>185</sup> See *Monthly Bulletin of the Special Higher Police* [特高月報], October 1944 issue, p. 24.

1943, Tōyama published a laudatory article on Nakano, comparing his *seppuku* to that of Takayama Hikurō<sup>186</sup> and likening the Tōjō regime to a “Shōwa-*bakufu*-like-entity.” He postulated that, just as Takayama had tried to overthrow the *bakufu* through his *seppuku*, Nakano’s suicide was a denial of the Tōjō regime.<sup>187</sup>

Writing about Nakano became less risky after the fall of the Tōjō cabinet in October 1944. In the final article published during his long political career, Ōtake Kan’ichi questioned the role of the Diet in both Nakano’s death and Japan’s disastrous situation. Ōtake concluded that “the loss of authority of the Diet was the most serious matter of the day. The crime committed by the members of the Diet deserves [to be punished] by ten thousand deaths.”<sup>188</sup> About Nakano’s suicide and Tōjō’s role in it, he wrote:

“There was no scarier enemy than Nakano, once you had made him your enemy. He would put fear into the hearts of ogres small and big alike. That is why the small and big ogres first of all wrested his writing brush from his hand, then tried to bind his tongue before putting him under arrest. That is the reason why, in order to communicate with the Emperor and the people, Nakano had only the means of suicide.”<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Takayama Hikokurō [高山彦九郎] (1747 - 1793). Samurai from Kōzuke domain and early activist for the cause of imperial restoration during the Tokugawa period, Takayama was put under arrest by the *bakufu* in Kurume, Kyūshū where he committed suicide.

<sup>187</sup> Tōyama Mitsuru, in *Dainichi* [大日], December 15, 1943 quoted in Inomata p. 752.

<sup>188</sup> Ōtake Kan’ichi [大竹貫一], “Performing one’s Duty as Member of Parliament” in *Gakan*, October 1944.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

## **Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

This dissertation's conclusions fall into two parts. In the first part, we address the question of why fascism from below, failed in Japan by examining the case of Nakano's Tōhōkai. Though Nakano's failure to launch a fascist movement in pre-war Japan can be explained in part by factors external to Nakano's life and activities, such as social, economic and political trends in interwar Japan as well as international dynamics and entanglements, these will receive only passing mention because they lie without the focus of this dissertation. Instead, we shall emphasize those factors intrinsic to Nakano, his understanding of fascism and the nature of the Tōhōkai. In the second part we look at how Nakano's story has been treated in post-war Japan, as well as how his legacy has been used and abused by various political players to their advantage.

### **Why Fascism from Below Failed in Japan: The Case of Nakano's Tōhōkai**

A biography of Nakano Seigō cannot give a conclusive answer to the question of why Japan did not have fascism from below. Among all the pre-war right-wing societies in Japan, however, Nakano's two proto-fascist parties were the ones that most closely resembled European fascism, so examining his failure sheds significant light on the larger question of why fascism itself failed to take hold in Japan.

### **General Explanations**

Nakano's failure to create popular mass movements modeled on European fascism, be it through the Kokumin Dōmei in the early 1930s or the Tōhōkai in the time thereafter, has as much to do with Nakano himself as with pre-war Japanese society.

When first introducing the distinction between fascism from above versus fascism from below in the context of Japan's pre-war history, Maruyama Masao proposed some general explanations of why the latter failed in Japan, including the facts that Japan had never had a bourgeois revolution and that it lacked a strong labor movement which could be captured by the fascist parties.<sup>1</sup> Despite the allure of such general claims, the extent of their accuracy remains debatable. One could equally point, among other things, to the fact that Japan did not go through the agony of total war in the years 1914-8, and therefore did not experience the wholesale uprooting of individual lives and the brutalizing of millions to fertilize the ground on which the seeds of fascist ideology could thrive thereafter.<sup>2</sup> However, these grand arguments clearly go beyond the scope of the present study and are mentioned here only for the sake of completeness.

More to the point is fact that Nakano's aim to create a popular mass party – that is, a party that would be based on power structures different from those established through the Meiji political settlement and that would eventually replace them – was fundamentally flawed. For one, Japan's traditional power channels, which ran from the provincial villages via the *jiban* to elected representatives in the provincial assemblies and the Diet at Japan's political center, proved to be much more flexible, adaptable and hence lasting than Nakano supposed.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, Nakano's view that this arrangement needed to be reformed through a national mass-based popular party was shared by only a few others. As it turned out, this small band of believers was not strong enough to dent the existing system. If European fascism can be said to have thrived on the weakness of post-WW1 democracies, then Nakano's project can be said to have been shattered by the robustness of the Meiji political system. As will be shown, Nakano never sought to create

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<sup>1</sup> Maruyama Masao, "The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism" in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, edited by Ivan Morris, (Oxford, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> On this point see for example Deutsch, Karl W.; "Social Mobilization and Political Development"; in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LV, no. 3, September 1961; pp. 493-514.

<sup>3</sup> See Toni C. Smith, "The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan", (Stanford, 1959), p. 201-125

a party that would compete with the state's monopoly on violence or its nationalist ideology. Since the existing political structures were strong and Nakano's challenge thereof was relatively weak, the Tōhōkai almost never became the target of the state's repression.

### **Lack of Violence**

In addition to his general explanations for Japan's failure to embrace fascism from below, Maruyama also noted that Japan's radical fascists failed to seek some sort of mass base.<sup>4</sup> He contends that fascism from below ceased to be a challenge to the state with the suppression of the February 26 uprising in 1936,<sup>5</sup> and that fascism thereafter was installed largely from above, with radicals providing merely the stimulus.

Maruyama's analysis, however, overlooks Nakano's attempt to create a mass movement, which only took off in earnest after 1936 and climaxed in 1939-41. Maruyama correctly highlights an important feature of Japan's pre-war right-wing movements, namely the divorce of radical fascist groups that resorted to violence but did not try to build a mass base from the more moderate fascist groups that sought to build a mass base but rejected violence as a means to political ends. Nakano's Tōhōkai clearly belonged to this latter group. The radical right-wing societies that, through their acts of terrorism, played such an important role in the years up to 1936 did indeed lose significance after the suppression of the February 26 uprising. Had all major attempts to cultivate fascism ended then, Maruyama's analysis might be sufficient. But it was after 1936 that Nakano's non-violent mass movement came to the forefront.

We have examined various explanations for Nakano's rejection of violence as a political tool. Perhaps Nakano, who was a roughneck during his youth, grew soft with the years. The loss of his first-born son and his wife, in particular, seem to have made him generally gentler.

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<sup>4</sup> Maruyama Masao, "The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism", p. 52, 73, 76, and 80.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 33 and p. 65 and following.



Alternatively, perhaps Nakano simply failed to understand that European fascism owed its success to, among other things, its embrace of violence. As we saw in Chapter Six, the interpretation of European fascism that Nakano introduced to Japan was so sanitized of its violent aspects that this author contends it was no longer fascism. Or it may be, as Gregory Kasza suggested, that in pre-war Japan violent acts and mass organization were seen “as mutually exclusive strategies,”<sup>6</sup> because violent acts fell out of favor with the public after the 1936 uprising. If so, abandoning violent tactics was the price Nakano had to play in order to clear the way for creating a mass movement. It was probably a combination of these factors that lead Nakano to maintain a non-violent stance in his political activities.

From beginning to end, the Kokumin Dōmei and later the Tōhōkai cast themselves as the legal branch of the right-wing reformist movement. Whatever the radical right-wing reformists sought to achieve by violent means, Nakano proposed achieving through the legal channels laid out in Japan’s constitution. Nakano hoped to rise to power just like Hitler in the 1933 election, but he ignored the role that illegal violence played in Hitler’s rise before and after 1933.

Nakano’s decision to forgo violence had important implications for his success. On the plus side, it may have made the Kokumin Dōmei, and later the Tōhōkai, more acceptable to a larger part of the electorate. Kasza correctly points out that the Tōhōkai was the most successful of the right-wing parties in creating a mass base, receiving more than two percent of the popular vote in 1937 and almost 3 percent in 1942.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, having a reliable paramilitary force of thugs at his disposal would have given Nakano the means to influence politics more directly, by threatening opponents, protecting allies, breaking up strikes, etc. As it was, Nakano’s

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<sup>6</sup> Kasza writes that “those pursuing violent tactic like the young officers and their civilian collaborators shunned a mass base, while those beginning to contemplate a mass movement did so out of disenchantment with terrorism. There is lacking the fascist amalgam of mass movement engaging simultaneously in legal and illegal methods to win power, the relative novelty which caught so many of Europe’s established political elites by surprise.” Gregory J. Kasza, “Fascism from Below? A comparative Perspective on the Japanese right, 1931-1936” in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 19, No. 4, October 1984, p. 619.

<sup>7</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 621.

main influence on politics was the Tōhōkai members who held a seat in parliament – a contingent that dwindled to 12 after the 1937 election and just seven after 1942. Throughout Nakano did not have much weight in the political world.

The violent struggle that had been crucial to the European fascist parties' development could also have provided the otherwise heterogeneous Tōhōkai with a sense of direction, a common bonding experience and some sort of martial *esprit de corps*. Nakano acknowledged this missed opportunity during a June 1939 speech: "A party that does not struggle does not have a real organization. It has no spiritual strength. It has no cohesion. It has no discipline. Even the Fascist and the Nazis perfected their organization only after having struggled."<sup>8</sup> Though he had experienced first-hand how the demonstrations in front of the British Embassy had both fueled the Tōhōkai's growth and cemented its cohesion, and though he clearly knew that struggle (especially violent struggle) could energize a party, he failed to advocate that the party embrace violence. The Tōhōkai, as a result, never gained the notoriety of the NSDAP, and, despite its uniforms, in its spirit the party did not become martial.

Finally, by renouncing violence, Nakano also gave up a measure of protection. He failed to learn an important lesson from his mentor, Tōyama Mitsuru, who in his youth gained a bad reputation for allegedly ordering the assassination of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ōkuma Shigenobu, in 1899 or for organizing violent interference in the 1892 general elections. Mitsuru was rumored ever after to have powerful connections to the Japanese underworld and plenty of young followers willing to lay their lives on the line. A reputation such as Tōyama's might have protected Nakano during his conflict with Tōjō.

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<sup>8</sup> Nakano Seigō, speech held June 2, 1939 at Seinen Kaikan in Tokyo, reprinted in Nakano Seigō "Decide Japan's Direction" [日本の動向を決定せよ], in *Tōtairikiku*, July 1939, p. 14.

## Repression

Raising the question of violence as a means to achieve political ends leads naturally to a discussion of state violence, though such political repression played a far larger role in Nakano's suicide than in the Tōhōkai's ultimate demise. Leaving aside an assassination attempt against Nakano during a speech tour in February 1941 (because the assassin's identity, and on whose orders he acted<sup>9</sup>, remains unclear) repression by the Japanese state only played a real role at the very end of Nakano's life. Throughout its existence the Kokumin Dōmei was not even monitored by the Special Higher Police in charge of keeping an eye on radical societies and parties. When the Tōhōkai was first mentioned in their monthly reports in 1933, it was the society's Sendai chapter founded indirectly by Ishiwara Kanji, not the think tank led by Nakano. Only from 1936-7 onward did Nakano's Tōhōkai appear regularly in Special Higher Police reports, but even then there was no mention of it being a threat to public peace that required action on the state's part.

State repression came to play a role only in the last two years of the party's existence, by which time the Tōhōkai was already in decline. Membership and party chapters began declining long before Nakano's arrest, with membership sliding to 9,875 by the end of 1942 from 25,547 the year before and party chapters falling to 73 from 114, over the same period.<sup>10</sup> Nakano's decision to join the Yokusan-Seiji-kai in the late spring of 1942 and the Tōhōkai's change in status from political party to cultural society were the main reasons for the falloff. The state's increasingly stiff repression of Nakano - which included censorship of his writings, an effective

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<sup>9</sup> During one of his speech tours in February 1941, while in Hiroshima, Nakano fell ill with pneumonia. He cancelled the speech scheduled for that evening and retired to his room in the Yoshikawa Inn in front of Hiroshima station. However, then he switched rooms with his assistant and Tōhōkai youth leader Nagata Masayoshi. During the night a thug entered the hotel, intending to kill Nakano but stabbing and severely wounding Nagata instead. A container filled with gasoline at the site of the crime suggests that the assassin had intended to burn down the hotel in order to destroy all evidence after the murder. Since the police was never able to find the culprit, his motives remain in the dark, but most biographers suspect that he was acting on behalf of an extremist right-wing organization. Greatly intimidated, Nakano would henceforth move about only in the company of body guards.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Nagai Kazu [永井和], "The Founding of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立]; in *Shirin* [史林]; Vol. LXI, No. 4, July 1978, p.133.

ban on his public speaking, and, eventually his arrest - in the last year of the Tōhōkai's existence was more a *coup de grace* to an already weak and disintegrating body than the main reason for the party's decline.

Finally, it should be recalled the state's organs required repeated prodding from Tōjō and his associates to start clamping down on Nakano and the Tōhōkai. The censorship bureau waved through Nakano's January 1, 1943 editorial without any corrections; only afterward did they start censoring Nakano's writing in earnest. While the Special Higher Police had monitored Nakano's Tōhōkai for years, years of inactivity suggests they never would have arrested Nakano or any Tōhōkai leaders on their own. The Special Higher Police only moved to arrest Nakano after Tōjō pressured them to do so, though they remained unsure of the charges. The judiciary first refused and then stalled to the very last minute to comply with Tōjō's wish to have Nakano locked away. In short, the state left the Tōhōkai unmolested for most of its existence, and state organs exercised repression only reluctantly during the Tōhōkai's escalating conflict with the Tōjō regime. Though important in explaining Nakano's suicide, political repression can hardly account for the failure of Nakano's fascist mass movement during the preceding 11 years.

### **Ideological Weaknesses**

As discussed in chapters four and five, the Tōhōkai's ideologically heterogeneous nature, which was a direct result of party leaders' decision to expand membership by incorporating already-existing mass organizations, was one of the factors that weakened the party. Growth was bought at the expense of ideological uniformity, resulting in structural weakness.

Another sort of ideological weakness stemmed from Nakano's decision to introduce a foreign ideology into Japan, a project which had always been a double-edged sword, but especially so in the case of fascism. On one hand, ever since the opening of Japan in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the West had been viewed as a champion to be emulated. Western ideas, technologies and fashions were powerful levers for social, economic and cultural change within Japan.

Traveling to the West and gaining first-hand knowledge of Western ways lent authority and the aura of modernity to at least two generations of Japanese reformers. Having lived in the West remained an important condition for rising to the most influential positions in Japanese society. Nakano's trip to Europe in his twenties and his later travels to Germany and Italy thus followed a well-established pattern of importing the latest European ideas into Japan.

On the other hand, Nakano's attempt to import European fascism came at time when Japan was emancipating itself from Western influences in multiple ways. Importing an ultra-nationalistic European ideology presented something of a contradiction while the state promoted replacing foreign words with Japanese ones and even Nakano argued that non-Asian powers should be expelled from Asia. This opened Nakano to criticism not only from pure-Japanists but also from conservatives such as Hiranuma, who in May 1942 wrote:

“How will the war of ideologies develop from here onward? Japan is always eager to imitate the West, especially people of standing, politicians and so-called scholars. For a time they imitated democracy and internationalism, and more recently they admired England and America before finally coming to adore the Nazis. Then they say that we too have to build such a thing [i.e. movement], but this contradicts our national polity [国体]...Now, however, they have forgotten this and are trying to imitate the Nazis. Democratic thought is cast away while German dictatorial thought is brought into the country. It is called National Socialism and is not so distant from Soviet Communism. They both run counter to Japan's national polity and both will only lead to harm.”<sup>11</sup>

Foreignness was not fascism's only drawback. Unlike liberalism, socialism, or communism, which can transcend domestic arenas to appeal to global audiences, Fascism and Nazism were bound inherently to their nation of origin. Much of their contents are nation-specific, leading later scholars to deny the existence of generic or universal fascism. Italian's fascism vision of the Roman antiquity, or Nazism's narrative of Germanic heroism, cannot be transferred to other nations. Nakano wisely never tried to bring those aspects of fascism to Japan,

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<sup>11</sup> Hiranuma Ki'ichirō Editorial Committee [平沼騏一郎回顧録編纂委員会編], “Retrospective of Hiranuma Ki'ichirō” [平沼騏一郎回顧録], (Tokyo, 1955) p. 77-78.

but, more importantly, he also never attempted to formulate a Japanese counterpart to these poignant historical narratives. The lack of strong national symbols and strong historical narratives is the third major ideological weakness of Nakano's interpretation of fascism.

As we have seen, Nakano's interpretation of fascism lacked a number of aspects that were important to the European originals. The glorification of youth and masculinity is one. An equally glorified version of the nation's past and a strong leadership figure (leadership principle) comprise two others. While Nakano might have succeeded without glorifying youth or masculinity, but the Tōhōkai's lack of control over powerful symbols of national identity and its lack of a unifying charismatic leader were crucial components of its failure. Nazism's power rested to a substantial extent on the fact that the ideology had created a set of symbols of national identity over which it maintained control; long after it gained power, the Nazi regime spent considerable energy controlling the symbols it created an effort to dictate to the populace what it meant to be German. There was no comparable effort on Nakano's or the Tōhōkai's side to create powerful symbols of national identity through which political power could be exercised.

Two explanations have been offered to account for this failure: First, perhaps Nakano lacked the will or imagination to engage in this sort of manipulation. Tōhōkai party members wore an arm band with the character "East" [東] on it, but this theme was not developed by the party in any way similar to the way in which the Nazis use the swastika. Second, and likely far more important, most of Japan's powerful national symbols were under the firm control of the state. Unlike the Nazis (and to a lesser extent the Italian Fascists), who thrived in a secular state that had abandoned national symbols – leaving a vacuum to be filled by others - the Japanese state kept a firm hold of the nation's historical narrative and symbols, as well as its vision of the future and unifying figures such as the Emperor. Nakano or any other aspiring fascist would thus not only have to had to create an alternative to the state's powerful symbols, but would then also have had to challenge and compete with the state. Taking such aggressive steps in the 1930s, as

the state was strengthening its grip over such symbols as it prepared for war, was difficult at best and dangerous at worst.

Nakano's reluctance to challenge the state's symbols is perhaps best illustrated by his lukewarm attitude toward the Emperor. Unlike many of his contemporaries, especially on the right-wing of the political spectrum, who placed the Emperor at the center of their ideological constructs, Nakano placed little weight on the supreme leader and rarely mentioned him.<sup>12</sup> While other right-wing activists waxed sentimental and got teary-eyed when discussing the Emperor, Nakano maintained a refreshingly sober and rational outlook on the few occasions he touched upon the subject.

In his liberal democratic years, Nakano's position on the Emperor had been moderately critical, which - given how the *genrō* used the Emperor to shield themselves from public criticism and Nakano's exposure to republican thought at Waseda - was almost to be expected. Nakano did not mind the imperial institution, but took issue with the way it was used to obstruct the path toward constitutional government. When the leaders of the first movement to protect the constitution, in particular Ozaki, were accused of committing *lèse-majesté* -for in demanding that Prime Minister Katsura resign even though he had been charged with forming the cabinet by the Emperor himself -Nakano came to Ozaki's defense. In doing so, he allowed a glimpse of his views on the constitutional position of Emperor and people:

“The thought that the monarch is some super-human deity was common in the barbaric ages of all the powers of this world. To put forward this sort of argument in the enlightened 20<sup>th</sup> century, however - that is, to argue that the monarch is somewhat different in kind from the people, is actually a violation of the monarch's dignity ...Since the Emperor is a member of the same human species, it must be anticipated that sometimes he will, just like any other human, make a mistake in his decrees...Even in our empire, we cannot exclude that in the next 10 million years there will never be an

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<sup>12</sup> If we accept Kasza's statement that the “one feature common to all rightist groups of the early 1930s – whether Japanist, national socialist, or agrarianist – ... was the centrality of the Emperor in their ideological doctrines”, then Nakano and the Tōhōkai were clearly the exception to the rule. Gregory J. Kasza, “Fascism from Below? A comparative Perspective on the Japanese right, 1931-1936”, p. 621.

unenlightened or at least mediocre monarch...If monarchs were never to commit any mistakes, then...the minister's duty to counsel [輔弼の任 one of the duties of ministers under the Meiji Constitution] the Japanese Emperor would be an empty word. No matter how you look at it, anyone counseling the Emperor does so on the assumption that the Emperor too can fail, just as the idea of providing advice [to the Emperor] assumes that he too has shortcomings...Ozaki has said what no one else dares to say and thus prepared the way for our grand constitution.”<sup>13</sup>

Six years later, following Germany's defeat in WW1, Nakano attacked the bureaucrats' interpretation of the Meiji Institution along German lines (i.e. their contention that the Meiji Constitution had been written on the German model as opposed to the more liberal English model), which Nakano believed ran against the will of Emperor Meiji as expressed in the Charter Oath. If Japan wanted to avoid ending up like defeated Germany, the interpretation of the Constitution had to be changed, giving more importance and power to the people. In Nakano's own words:

“If you wish to restore the nation's fate by bowing to those outside, you must look at global trends and begin to work on great internal reforms...If you want to realize this, you must first correct the interpretation of the Constitution. The spirit of the Meiji Restoration is crystallized in the five articles of the Charter Oath and the Meiji Constitution is nothing but a means to expand the spirit of the beginning of the Meiji era. Among those who drafted the Constitution, however, the intention was to base it on the example of the Prussian constitution. They studied the tricks of Bismarck with the hope of controlling the entire realm. Unfortunately, we must deplore that the bureaucratic interpretation of the imperial Constitution did not stay close to Emperor Meiji's plan...Germany, which clung to the Prussian constitution, making it the basis of its nation's organization, is in a terrible situation today. If our nation does not take warning from the example of its precursor, the spirit of the Jinmu foundation of our country, we cannot hope to gain immortality of 1000 years. The imperial household is sacred and should not be violated. Therefore the imperial household is above politics and society, and is without responsibility [無責任]. In other worlds, the cabinet answers to parliament. By answering to parliament, it also answers to the people. And by answering to the people, it also answers to the Emperor [国民に対して責に任ずるは、天皇に対して責に任ずる所なり]. In the end, the unity of sovereign and subject [君臣一体] is the spirit on which our nation was established and the principal aim of our

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<sup>13</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Letter addressed to Ozaki” [号堂に興ふる書], in “Shichi-Kin, Hachi-Tate” [七擒八縦], (Tokyo, 1913), p. 166 and following.



constitution.”<sup>14</sup>

Nakano's statements are interesting not so much for what he said as for the things left unsaid. One could argue that by stating that the Emperor is above politics and society, Nakano was also saying that the Emperor has no role in politics; by making him “without responsibility,” Nakano was also divesting him of power. By stating that the cabinet answers to the people, and then to the Emperor (in that order), Nakano challenged one of the foundations of the Meiji constitutional setting, namely the location of sovereignty. Unable to change the wording of the constitution (which clearly made the Emperor sovereign), he sought to change the interpretation and make the people sovereign, at least *de facto*. As Nagao rightly notes, Nakano believed the nation [国] was not the Emperor, but the Japanese people.<sup>15</sup>

Did Nakano's position toward the Emperor change during his fascist period? Had Nakano been serious from the beginning in creating a fascist movement, he should have tried to create an ideology, movement and, eventually, regime that created an alternative power structure and would be able to either integrate the powerful symbol of the Emperor or replace it (though it is hard to imagine how the latter could have been achieved). Nakano could have followed the example of Italy, where Mussolini co-existed with the King (following Germany's example was impossible. Hitler entered the political void left by the Kaiser's escape to the Netherlands, while Nakano had to acknowledge the reality of the Emperor). Nakano, however, did nothing of the sort.

Initially, Nakano maintained his moderately critical stance toward the imperial institution. Nakano Yasuo notes correctly that one of the major differences between Kita Ikki's 1919 plan for

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<sup>14</sup> Nakano Seigō, “Witnessing the Peace Conference” (Tokyo: Tōhōjiron-sha, 1919), p. 238-42. See also Nakano Seigō “Why the nation's difficulties are not taken into consideration” [何ぞ国難に鑑みざる], in *Tōhōjiron*, June 1919.

<sup>15</sup> Nagao Ryō [長尾遼], “Moving peoples' souls” [留魂人を動かす], (Tokyo: Hara Shobō [原書房], 1998), p. 294.

national reconstruction and Nakano's 1933 counter-proposal (which was nevertheless modeled on Kita's original) is that Nakano continued to reject imperial sovereignty, if not explicitly, then by omission.<sup>16</sup> In Nakano's "Principles for a Plan for National Reconstruction" [国家改造計画綱領], the words for "Emperor" [天皇] and "Empire" [皇国] do not appear once; instead, he uses less laden synonyms such as "*kunshi*" [君子]. The state council that Nakano proposed would:

"serve the emperor and carry out the wishes of the people. The emperor's army is, however, simultaneously the people's army and stands on the foundation made up of the masses. Thus both state affairs and military affairs are based on the people. The military barracks are a miniature copy of society, and the morale of the troops is a reflection of the people's spirit. The state council should thus unify state and military affairs through the people."<sup>17</sup>

As the proponents of Emperor ideology became ever louder, however, Nakano became more timid in his pronouncements. At times, he even supported the more authoritarian interpretations of the Emperor ideology. When, in early 1935, the Japanese right launched an attack on Professor Minobe's "Emperor-as-organ theory", which for years had been the accepted mainstream interpretation of the constitution, Nakano took the issue up in March and May 1935 *Gakan* editorials.

Starting out with a historical analysis of alternative interpretations of the Meiji Constitution, Nakano first identified autocratic theories of Hozumi and Uesugi that Nakano claimed had been used by the Meiji Oligarchs to strengthen their position. The more moderate Minobe interpretation had similarly been used by liberal politicians not only to legitimize their rise to power in the Taishō years, but also to defend it against the reformist challenge of the mid-1930s. Nakano believed this made these liberal politicians into reactionaries, or "reactionary

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<sup>16</sup> See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 748.

<sup>17</sup> Nakano Seigō, "Outline Plan for National Reconstruction" [国家改造計画綱領], (Tokyo, 1933), p. 213.

liberals” hiding behind Minobe’s interpretation. The right-wing attack against these reactionary liberals, was, according to Nakano, not a return to former oligarchic despotism. Instead:

“The movement to destroy the ‘Emperor-as-organ theory’ does not amount to a theory for interpreting the Constitution but an overflow from the spirit of reconstruction thundering through our age.”<sup>18</sup>

In the end, Nakano neither came to the defense of Minobe’s emperor-organ theory nor rejected it as contrary to Japan’s constitution or the Kokutai. Though he never fully subscribed to the Emperor ideology – his pronouncements in later years, even in the midst of the Pacific War, read more like reluctant lip-service to the dominant trends of his time. He never challenged the Emperor ideology, either directly or by trying to establish himself or Konoe as alternative symbols of leadership. As we have seen in chapter five, rather than aiming to integrate the state into his version of fascism, he ended up integrating his version of fascism into the state. When Konoe launched the IRAA, Nakano dissolved the Tōhōkai and joined its ranks.

### **Timing**

As crucial as Nakano’s ideological weaknesses were in condemning his fascist efforts to failure, timing, that is to say the sequence of events unfolding around Nakano and his timely or not so timely interaction with them, also played a role. While European fascist movements had developed into fascist regimes before WW2 broke out, Nakano’s fascist party was still only a budding movement (if that, and a far cry from being a regime) when Japan entered the war with China that escalated into the Pacific War. Nakano was aware of this fundamental difference in timing when he wrote in 1939:

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in and translated by Oates, p. 64; Quote taken from “Editorial” [時論], in *Gakan* [我観] May 1935, p. 7.

“In Germany and Italy, the national reforms were completed before these two countries overcame the foreign crisis. In the case of Japan, however, the nation is confronted with a crisis at a time when soft parliamentary politics, democracy, liberalism, hedonism and egoism have not been reformed, and the challenges of genuine reform politics are given serious thought only by a small minority. Because of this, Japan has confronted the crisis without politics, and it was the Yamato spirit who late in the crisis finally displayed its glory.”<sup>19</sup>

If in 1939 Nakano confined his observations to noting differences between Germany’s, Italy’s and Japan’s experience, two years later he expressed fear that his and the Tōhōkai’s efforts would come too late to influence Japan in any significant way:

“I am sad. I fear that our efforts won’t be in time. I fear that we will fall in the course of the hard struggle. After our country’s situation becomes more difficult, however, and after we have fallen, I hope that there will step forward from the ranks of the Tōhōkai Youth Group a figure who is equal to Hitler in his best years. This is my earnest desire (applause). However, that will happen only in the far-off future. And if there is no Hitler today, than I wish at least for another Clemenceau.”<sup>20</sup>

The timing of many events (e.g. the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the attack on Pearl Harbor, etc.) were beyond Nakano’s control, but there were many instances where he could freely determine the timing and still managed to get it completely wrong. Consider the relative leisure with which he approached the task of re-launching the Tōhōkai as a mass movement in the 18 months leading up to the outbreak of war with China (i.e., between Nakano’s departure from the Kokumin Dōmei and the Marco Polo Bridge Incident that led to war between Japan and China). While the Tōhōkai was officially re-launched as a political party in mid-1936, it was not until war with China erupted that Nakano became fully committed to making it a popular mass-party, and

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<sup>19</sup> Nakano Seigō in a speech held at the first Tōhōkai national convention on December 9, 1938 reprinted in “On the Occasion of the Tōhōkai’s First National Convention” [東方会第一回全国大会に臨みて], in *Tōtairiku*, March, 1939, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Nakano Seigō, “In Reply to Churchill and Roosevelt – Appealing to the Japanese People” [ルーズヴェルト、チャーチルに答えて 日本国民に告ぐ], speech held September 13, 1941 reprinted in “In the Middle of the Storm of the Global Restoration” [世界維新の嵐に立つ], (Tokyo: Tsuru Shobō [鶴書房], June, 1942), p. 142.

it was only after his return from Europe nine months later that he engaged in a full-scale expansion of the party along the lines of the European model. He thus spent somewhere between 18 and 30 months idling rather than building a party. Granted, Nakano could not have foreseen the outbreak of the war with China, and perhaps he indulged in Ishiwara's belief that Japan would need another 10 years of peace before entering a war, but he nonetheless missed a chance to prepare himself for a crisis during a period of relative tranquility.

Nakano's clumsy timing stands out most perceptibly when it comes to the choice between compromising or taking a stand. With the benefit of hindsight, the number of occasions where Nakano should have compromised to attain his aim (the merger with the Social Mass Party stands out as an example) is matched only by the number of occasions when he should have taken a stand (against entering the IRAA, for instance, or on opposing the National Mobilization Law). Rather than becoming better at such judgment calls with time and experience, moreover, Nakano seems to have gotten worse. It was thus pointless to oppose the Tōhōkai's entry into the Yokusan-Seiji-kai in the spring of 1942, only to give in less than 3 months, just as it was ill-timed to reject Tōjō's offer to work in the Information Bureau in the summer of 1943, only to ask Tōjō through his henchman Yokata to be used in some other function the day before his suicide.

### **Conclusion**

The failure of Nakano's attempt to introduce a fascist mass movement in pre-war Japan can be accounted for only by a complex combination of factors. Japan's political situation and the absence of certain conditions that set the stage for fascism's growth in Europe - such as an existing mass-movement culture, a bourgeois revolution and the experience of total war, -provide debatable yet powerful explanations. Unfortunately, a biography of Nakano does not lend itself to either confirm or reject these general explanations.

If we focus on Nakano's life and the development of the two proto-fascist parties launched under his leadership, the following factors stand out in explaining Nakano's failure from. The fact

that state repression played such a small role suggests that Nakano's failure was due not so much to the strength of the state's system as it was to the weakness of Nakano's challenge. In addition to the fact that the Tōhōkai simply failed to gain massive support during elections, the party's feebleness was a function of both its ideological weakness and its rejection of violence. If one accepts the notion that fascism in Europe grew like a cancer from within the liberal democratic state; that the fascist ideologies invented a set of alternative nationalist symbols as well as an alternative narrative of the nation's glorious past and an equally glorious alternative vision of the nation's future, all of which exerted a seductive power over the national psyche; and if one further accepts that fascist movements competed with the state, not only in terms of ideology, but also by challenging the state's monopoly on violence and that in so doing, the fascist movements became a state within the state before the fascist regimes ultimately supplanted the state, one holds the key to understanding why Nakano's adaptation of this model to Japan failed. While he dared to question the state intellectually in his speeches and writings, on occasions even challenging the sacredness of the Emperor, he did not dare to challenge it politically – aiming to be a state within the state and eventually aspiring to become the state. Of course one could speculate that he might have become more courageous had he had more support, but that would go beyond the scope of a historical account.

### **Nakano Seigō Remembered**

One may rightly wonder if it would not have been more fitting to start this section with a different caption, one that reading “Nakano Seigō Forgotten,” for his name and life have been largely forgotten by contemporary Japanese. Apart from historians and non-academics interested in the history of the early Shōwa period (often gentlemen who were young boys in those years), most contemporary Japanese associate nothing with Nakano's name. Even graduates of Waseda University - which, thanks to hosting the country's largest collection of Nakano's works, has

become somewhat of a center for Nakano-related studies - often do not know anything about him, his life, his party, or the role he played in pre-war Japanese politics.

This should not come as a surprise. Nakano was most active and prominent during a period of Japanese history (before and during WW2) that later generations of Japanese call the “dark valley” and would rather not revisit. By introducing fascism to Japan, moreover, and advocating the Triple Alliance with the European fascist powers, Nakano became partly responsible for associating Japan with fascism and making Japan an accomplice of Nazi crimes. Even if his opposition to Tōjō was somewhat redeeming, Nakano occupies one of the darkest corners of the dark valley, and who can be blamed for not wishing to bring light to it?

More important than the desire for national amnesia, however, is the fact that in spite of his many achievements as a journalist and politician, Nakano failed to bring the major projects of his life to fruition, and in many ways remained a second-rate figure in Japan’s political arena. Comparing Japanese politics of the 1930s and 1940s with a play, one might say that Nakano was often a critic, sometimes the scriptwriter, almost always on stage, but hardly ever the main actor and never the director. He had many connections, some influence, little prestige and even less power and while he was present at some of the most fateful turns in Japanese history, he almost invariably failed to shape the course of history according to his ideas. The only instances when he was able to influence history – the conclusion of the Triple Alliance and the southern advance – in retrospect turned out to be grave mistakes that Japanese citizens have preferred to forget, together with the people responsible.

Even those who kept Nakano’s memory alive in the years after his death, and especially after the end of the war, found it convenient to remember only certain parts while forgetting others. This, too, should not come as a surprise, for history is patient and defenseless. It does not object when people use and abuse it for short-term gain, selecting evidence to suit their needs and ignoring the rest. After all, we remember historical figures not for their sake, but for our own. Why should the memory of Nakano be different?

As we have seen, the struggle over Nakano's legacy started the moment he killed himself and continues to this day. Remarkably, Nakano's colorful, contradictory life opened the door to equally colorful and contradictory interpretations whose evolution over time was not without its own zigs and zags. The two poles of the interpretation spectrum are in fact so different that one would not be faulted for wondering if there were not one but two Nakano Seigōs.

### **Nakano the Liberalist**

In Japan's immediate post-war period, with fascism utterly discredited and democracy vindicated (communism also experienced a brief revival in Japan, until with the onset of the Cold War the occupation authorities decided Japan would be better off without it), most who remembered Nakano chose to remember his liberal period or his opposition to Tōjō while trying to distance themselves from Nakano's infatuation with fascism.

These exercises in historical surgery took various forms. Some tried to play down the relevance of Nakano's fascist years or their own relationships with him during that time. After the war Miki Bukichi thus wrote: "At the time, it seems that Nakano was seen by many as a nationalist [国粹論者], but he was nothing of the sort. He was a constitutionalist [立憲主義の人] through and through, and therefore opposed the Tōjō military cabinet."<sup>21</sup> Nakano's infatuation with fascism was often described as some sort of abnormality, while his opposition to Tōjō showed the "real Nakano". Nakano's life-long friend Ogata went a step further, dismissing Nakano's praise of fascism as a "betrayal" [変説改論] and a sign of insanity: "To me, who knows [Nakano's] normal self, his imitation-fascist uniforms, the armbands modeled upon the 'Hakenkreuz' [ハケンクロイツ swastika] and his tour to Germany and Italy all look like the

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<sup>21</sup> Miki Bukichi [三木武吉], "Fight to the death against the Tōjō cabinet" [東条内閣との死闘], part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 12.



deeds of a madman [憑き物がした].”<sup>22</sup> Ogata also stressed that he himself had influenced Nakano toward democracy in the 1920s and noted that to preserve political differences from harming their friendship in the 1930s, the two men agreed to talk only about horses.<sup>23</sup>

Others have gone a step further, arguing that Nakano was never really a politician at heart (and if so, then only a lousy one<sup>24</sup>), but rather a scholar<sup>25</sup> or an artist.<sup>26</sup> These claims are easily dismissed. While Nakano saw himself always as an educator as well as a politician, and while there were moments in his life in which he may have regretted embarking on a political career – when visiting Fukuoka for the last time in the summer of 1943, for instance, he told his former teacher Shibata that he wished to dedicate his life solely to education in the future – in the final analysis he never abandoned politics. Whatever educational activities he undertook were always an addition to his political works. Moreover, with the possible exception of the martial-arts instruction offered at his dorm, his educational outreach was always political in content.

Indeed, throughout his life Nakano was a politician through and through, showing little interest in anything that lay outside the realm of political affairs. With the exception of his private family life and hobbies (e.g. *jūdō* and later horseback riding), his thoughts circled around politics and politics alone. In his writings, one searches in vain for aesthetic, epistemological, scientific,

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<sup>22</sup> Quotes taken from Ogata, p. 21 & 23.

<sup>23</sup> See Ogata, p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> See Ogata, p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> This argument is put forward by Inomata (see p. 307-08) who points out that Nakano was too learned for a fascist while Ogata Taketora writes: “In the end, his life was the life of a scholar [修道者] and this shows in his writings.” Ogata, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Sugimori Kōjirō described Nakano as an artist: “By birth, Nakano was suited to be a politician. He was extremely suited for that profession. There is no need to describe his talents for this occupation in detail. In addition to his political acumen, Nakano also had large amount of artistic talent. His artistic talents were consciously concentrated in his political work which may be the reason why he never displayed his artistic vein. It is extremely rare that someone excels in both political acumen and artistic talent. Since it is rare it is also very significant.” Sugimori Kōjirō [杉森幸次郎]; “At the used book store” [古本屋にて], part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 9 – 10.

artistic, or metaphysical considerations made for their own sake. Those who knew Nakano agree that: “Nakano liked to discuss politics until late into the night” [天下の大事を語って。。。].<sup>27</sup> Colleagues, in fact, found discussing any other topic impossible. Honryō Shinjirō, professor at Waseda who was in Berlin at the time of Nakano’s visit in 1938, recalled:

“At the time I took him [i.e. Nakano] out to play. Yet, when I took him to a concert he snored, at the cinema he fell asleep, at the cabaret he yawned, saying ‘what’s so funny about women lifting their legs?’ Whenever the conversation turned to politics, however, whether domestic or international, any subject would do. First his eyes would light up. Then he would forget time and place, and talk with great animation. I was very surprised. This person had not a single interest outside of politics.”<sup>28</sup>

Given the difficulty of trying to play down Nakano’s fascist period or his stature as a politician, most followers have taken a different approach to dealing with his zigzagging biography by played up the non-fascist periods before 1931 and, especially, his opposition to Tōjō after Pearl Harbor. Among the many popular books and articles written by Nakano’s former followers and associates, we do not find a single one dealing specifically with Nakano’s infatuation with Hitler. There are, however, countless publications dealing with the reasons for his suicide, which reflects the fact that Nakano’s devotees sought to benefit from the redeeming qualities of his final years and his suicide.<sup>29</sup> Anyone wishing to launch a career in politics or in

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<sup>27</sup> Nakayama Yū [中山優]; “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Kyōtsū no Hiroba* [共通の広場], September 1952, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Honryō Shinjirō quoted in Inomata p. 391.

<sup>29</sup> Examples include but are not limited to: Kimura Ki [木村毅], “Nakano Seigō’s Last Drama” [中野正剛の最後の戯曲], (Tokyo, 1946); Miki Bukichi [三木武吉], “Fight to the death against the Tōjō cabinet” [東条内閣との死闘], part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 10 – 16; Tanabe Tadao [田辺忠雄], “The death of Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛の死]; in *Tokyo News* [東京だより], February, 1958; Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刃したか], (Tokyo 1949); Mitamura, Takeo [三田村武夫], “A Record of Warnings: the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nakano’s Suicide” [警戒の記録：中野正剛自刃二十周年に当たって], (Tokyo, 1963); Nakano Yasuo [中野泰雄], “The Two Enigmas Surrounding Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛の二つの謎], in *Jinbutsu Ōrai* [人物往来], December 1956; Hosokawa, Takaichirō [細川隆一郎], “Learn from Nakano Seigō’s Suicide” [中野正剛の自刃に学

public life simply found it much more advantageous to be associated with Nakano the democrat who had fought Tōjō's militarism rather than with Nakano the fascist who had facilitated the military's rise to power.

The meetings of the Nakano Seigō Society [正剛会]<sup>30</sup> that commemorated the anniversary of Nakano's death serve as a microcosm of how Nakano's legacy was used. The meetings were attended by Nakano's family, friends or followers, such as Ogata Taketora, Tokutomi Sohō, Mitamura Takeo, etc., who often shared an anecdote concerning Nakano and then speculated what Nakano would do if he were still alive.<sup>31</sup> In doing the latter, they used the revived Nakano as a mouthpiece to voice their own views about contemporary political affairs, and manipulated Nakano's memory to serve their respective purposes.

Inatomi Ryōbito, who by 1953 had become a MP for the Socialist Party [社会党], thus celebrated Nakano – who as early as 1932 had advocated allegedly socialist policies designed to better the lot of Japan's workers and farmers – as an “ally of the weak” [弱きものの味方]. The implication was clear: Inatomi suggested that he and the Socialist Party were the rightful heirs to Nakano's legacy, as he had always argued that “a politician should not stand above the people,

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べ], in *Ronten* [論点]; 18(2), 1999.5 pp. 42-43; Narahashi Wataru [榎橋渡]; “I Will Cut my Belly and Die” [腹切って死ぬのだ], part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 31 - 32; Watanabe, Yukio [渡部行男], “The Enigma of Nakano Seigō's Suicide” [中野正剛の自決の謎], (Fukuoka, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> The Seigō-kai or Seigō Society was a body founded shortly after the war, composed mostly of former friends and followers of Nakano Seigō. The society's main activities included the organization of lectures (often commemorating Nakano's life and death) and the publication of books by and on Nakano. Thus in 1953, on the tenth anniversary of Nakano's death, the Society published Nakano's last lecture series held in the spring and summer of 1943 on the subject of the Kenmu Restoration. Nakano Seigō, “History of the Kenmu Restoration” [建武中興史論], (Tokyo: Seigō-kai [正剛会], 1953).

<sup>31</sup> In 1954, the Seigō society published a collection of commemorative speeches by various of Nakano's friends and contemporaries held the previous year. The title of the book, “Nakano Seigō is Alive”, expresses well the nostalgic tone of these essays, which by and large give a positive description of Nakano. Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954)

but struggle with the people.”<sup>32</sup> Tokano Takeshi, MP and member of the Socialist Party’s left-wing faction, wrote in 1954 in a similar vein, stressing the fact that Nakano was influenced by G.D.H. Cole’s version of Socialism and adding wrongly: “Nakano’s patriotic passion in later years made him commit the mistake of becoming a fascist. Even after having met with Mussolini and Hitler, however, he never had much esteem for either of these two people.”<sup>33</sup> Tokano went as far as calling Nakano a “revolutionary who would not submit to the established powers.”<sup>34</sup>

While the socialists thus cast Nakano as revolutionary fighting for the weak, his more right-leaning associates emphasized a different picture. The case of Mitamura Takeo and his 1949 “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” illustrate the point well. Originally a policeman, Mitamura joined Nakano’s Tōhōkai and worked his way up through various positions to become Nakano’s right-hand man. Like Nakano a member of parliament, Mitamura was arrested in 1943, but unlike most other Tōhōkai members he actually served a term in prison. Purged from public office in the immediate post-war period, he was re-elected to the Diet in 1955 as a Liberal Democratic Party member. Throughout his later career, Mitamura remained one of Nakano’s most outspoken and uncritical fans, often casting himself as the manager of Nakano’s inheritance. Highly nostalgic for the Tōhōkai, Mitamura on occasion wrote things such as: “I wait for the flag of the Tōhōkai to fly again.”<sup>35</sup> Though Mitamura conceded that, with hindsight, some of Nakano’s “actions and propositions would have to be criticized” (supposedly he was referring to Nakano’s infatuation with Hitler and Mussolini), he added that Nakano’s actions in his last years

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<sup>32</sup> Inatomi Ryōbito [稲富稜人], “An Ally of the Weak” [弱きものの味方], in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], (Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房]; 1954) p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Tokano Takeshi [戸叶武]; “Nakano Seigō’s merciful prayer” [中野正剛の悲願], in Seigō-kai eds. [正剛会], “Nakano Seigō is Alive” [中野正剛は生きている], Tokyo, Akane-shobō [あかね書房]; 1954; p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫]; “The Spirit of Eternal Camaraderie” [同志永久の魂], part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 21-24.

showed the “real Nakano,” whom Mitamura believed was “a thorough antimilitarist [彼は徹底した軍閥嫌いであった。] Aligning himself with the pro-democratic euphoria that swept Japan in the post-war period, Mitamura concluded that Nakano’s “ghost is probably smiling in his grave, as three thousand years of...autocratic feudal government have perished” and “a democratic revolution has dawned.”<sup>36</sup>

Nakano thus became a socialist revolutionary to some and an anti-militarist democrat to others.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, when the NHK radio program “The Truth Box,” authorized by the Occupation Forces, labeled Nakano as “one of the best [最も優れた] individualist politicians [個人主義政治家] that modern Japan has brought forward,” adding that “he belongs to the school of individualist politicians who have been raised in Japan’s political world since the early days of Meiji,” the accolade said less about Nakano than it did about the occupation authorities’ desire to identify some sort of democratic tradition of resistance in war-time Japan upon which to build a democratic post-war future.<sup>38</sup> There was, in short, a shared political interest in post-war Japan that Nakano be remembered as someone who had fought militarism and Tōjō rather than someone who had facilitated the latter’s rise to power, that he be remembered as a democrat rather than a non-violent authoritarian.

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<sup>36</sup> Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刃したか], (Tokyo, 1949) except the quote concerning Nakano’s antimilitarism which is taken from page 26, all other quotes are taken from the preface.

<sup>37</sup> In his first book about Nakano, Inomata (Nakano’s former publicity aid and youth activist) also describes Nakano as an anti-militarist. See Inomata Keitarō [猪俣敬太郎], “Nakano Seigō and the Japanese Militarists: a Struggle for Life and Death” [中野正剛と日本軍閥：宿命の決闘], (Tokyo: Society for the Spread of the Democracy [民主制度普及会], 1951).

<sup>38</sup> The program on Nakano was the first of the “Truth Box” [真相箱] series broadcast by NHK. The sequel on Nakano was broadcast on January 18, 1946 and can be found quoted at length in Mitamura Taeko [三田村武夫], “Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?” [中野正剛は何故自刃したか] (Tokyo, 1949), p. 5-8. Mitamura in turn quoted from Sōgō Press [総合プレス社版], High Command of the Allied Forces, Private Information and Education Bureau, Radio Broadcasting [連合軍最高司令部民間情報教育局編ラジオ放送], “The Truth Box” [真相箱] “The truth is like this” [真相はかうだ], No. 1, p.3-4.

The role that Nakano's legacy played in post-war Japanese society can therefore be compared in some ways to the role played by the conspirators around von Stauffenberg in Germany. In both cases, the desire to find some sort of nationally, or at least individually, redeeming act of resistance among what otherwise appeared to have been ocean of murderous insanity, led people to idealize and embellish the memory of Nakano's and Stauffenberg's struggle against their respective dictatorial regimes. Both men's resistance against the dictators of their time caused later generations to lionize them as precursors to modern-day democrats, which neither was.

Accordingly, Ōya Sōichi<sup>39</sup> was right to note in 1952: "It is somewhat strange to argue, as many did after the war, that just because they were disliked by Tōjō, Nakano and Ishiwara Kanji were anti-militaristic heroes."<sup>40</sup> As has been shown in chapter seven, even when opposing Tōjō, Nakano did not return to the liberal democratic views he held in the 1920s, but held onto fascism and totalitarianism as a third way that evolved from liberalism and socialism and transcended both. Believing fascism and totalitarianism to be ideally suited to the business of waging war, Nakano in 1943 did not want to return to a more liberal Japan but rather hoped to become more like his conception of either Germany or Italy.

Nakano was not the "anti-militarist" Mitamura, Inomata and others made him out to be. He did not oppose the war itself, and in fact explicitly expressed his support for the war even as he criticized the government's policies. When it comes to allotting responsibility for the war it is therefore correct to see Nakano and Tōjō as "accomplices" [仲間どうし] rather than

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<sup>39</sup> Ōya Sōichi [大宅壮一] (1900 – 1970), commentator and critic.

<sup>40</sup> Ōya Sōichi, "A lively group of characters in the middle of a storm" [嵐の中の人物群像], in *Economist* [エコノミスト], March 20, 1952; special Edition commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the magazines foundation [別冊、創刊三〇年記念], p. 24. Ōya's comment was echoed by Maruyama Masao criticizing how after war, "even outright fascists came back as 'democrats' simply because they were opposed to Tōjō." Maruyama Masao, "The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism" in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, edited by Ivan Morris (Oxford, 1963), p. 75-76.

opponents.<sup>41</sup> Let it be clear: As the army settled into the saddle of power, people such as Nakano held the stirrups! Accordingly he bears some responsibility for the war and its outcome.

### **Nakano the Fascist**

Years passed before the biased positive treatment Nakano's legacy received from his followers and associates was balanced with the memory of his fascist years. Maruyama Masao was probably not thinking specifically about Nakano when he wrote that one should remain "critical toward those out-and-out fascists who came forward after the war posing as democrats on the sole grounds of having opposed Tōjō."<sup>42</sup> Once the word was out, however, professional historians followed his advice and subsequent academic research focused almost exclusively on Nakano's fascist period, almost as if to provide a counterweight to the one-sided image given in earlier popular accounts.<sup>43</sup> While the academic writing may have been a necessary correction of the popular memory, it was equally one-sided – only in a different direction.

Time's passage and the increasing distance between Japan and its painful war memories also opened the door to unconventional interpretations of Nakano's life. Among the more harmless (but nevertheless misguided), we find comparisons of Nakano to Mishima Yukio that

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<sup>41</sup> Historical Research Association, eds. [歴史研究会編], "History of the Pacific War" [太平洋戦争史], 5 vols., (Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shimpō-sha, 1954), vol. 4, p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> Maruyama Masao, "The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism" in "Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics", edited by Ivan Morris, (Oxford, 1963), p. 34.

<sup>43</sup> See Kanechika Teruo, "Nakano Seigō and Fascist Thought" [中野正剛とファシズム思想] three-part article published in *The Waseda Journal of Political Science and Economics* [早稲田政治経済学雑誌], part one, no. 196, pp. 37-62, December 1965; part two, no. 232, pp. 1-20, October 1972; part three, no. 234, p. 1-23, August 1973; Arima Manabu [有馬学], "The Organization and Policy of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の組織と政策], in *Shi-en* [史淵], Kyūshū Daigaku Bungaku-bu [九州大学文学部], No. 114, 1977.3, p. 61-85; Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Shirin* [Journal of History], vol. 61, no.4, pp. 106-141, July 1978; Nagai Kazuo, "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Shirin* [Journal of History] vol. 62, no.1, pp. 98-133, January 1979; Itō, Takashi; "Nakano Seigō and the Tōhōkai" [中野正剛と東方会] in "The Politics of the Showa period – Continued" [昭和期の政治—続き], (Tokyo, 1993).

hinge on little more than the fact that both were considered right-wing and both killed themselves by committing *seppuku*.<sup>44</sup>

Other interpretations were not as harmless. As die-hard fascists who went into hibernation in the immediate post-war period timidly broke their self-imposed inactivity and silence, a younger generation of neo-fascists gathered around them and launched new right-wing organizations. Some sought to mis-appropriate Nakano's memory for their purposes. A certain Ushijima Tokutarō<sup>45</sup>, editor of "Jasco" [ジャスコ], the organ of a racist student organization by the name "Japan Student Conference" [日本学生会議], relaunched a magazine recycling the name of the Tōhōkai's organ *Tōtairiku*.

The most bizarre interpretation comes from the National Socialist Japanese Workers Party [国家社会主義日本労働者党], often also written in German as "Nationalsozialistische Japanische Arbeiterpartei" (NSJAP). As the NSJAP's name and acronym suggest, its founders aimed to be the Japanese counterpart to the NSDAP, the German war-time Nazi party.<sup>46</sup> Founded in 1982, the NSJAP sees itself in the tradition of the "Japanese National Socialists, Turanists<sup>47</sup> and anti-Semitists" that they trace to the thought of the Yūzonsha, Kita Ikki, Akamatsu

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<sup>44</sup> Nagao Ryō [長尾遼], "Moving the Souls of People" [留魂人を動かす], (Tokyo: Hara Shobō [原書房], 1998).

<sup>45</sup> Ushijima Tokutarō [牛嶋徳太郎] (1951? - ?), right-wing activist and editor of a racist student magazine called "Jasco" [ジャスコ].

<sup>46</sup> All quotes are taken from the English-language section of the NSJAP web-site at [www.nsjap.com](http://www.nsjap.com) which however is no longer online in 2010 (last accessed in fall 2005). Should the reader feel that some of the English quotations are awkward, this author would like to assure him, that they are indeed awkward in the original – grammatical or spelling mistakes were not corrected.

<sup>47</sup> According to the NSJAP, "Turanism" or "Turanianism" are anthropological theories according to which the Japanese, the Hungarian, the Finish and the Estonians races all have their origin in a "Turanid race" which they claim is supported by "DNA analysis as well as linguistic relationship among their languages. Thus, Turanism / Turanianism calls for the solidarity of the Turanians". Before the war the Turanist movement in Japan established organizations such as the "Alliance of Turanian People" (TURAN 民族同盟) in 1921 and the "Turanian Society of Japan" (日本ツラン協会) in the early 1930s.



Katsumaro, the Society of International Politics and Economics (SIPE 国際政経学会<sup>48</sup>) founded by General Shiōden Nobutaka<sup>49</sup>, General Ōshima Hiroshi (war-time ambassador to Germany), Shiratori Toshio (war-time ambassador to Italy), Karl Haushofer (German geo-politician), and Nakano Seigō. The party's aim "to restore the new non-hereditary system of the Shōgun", establishing in the economic sphere a "corporatistic autarky against international capitalism and communism" and preserving "the tradition and price [*sic!*] of our fatherland"<sup>50</sup>. Although it is highly doubtful that Nakano would have approved of the NSJAP's activities, the party nonetheless traces its origins to him and modeled their flag upon the Tōhōkai flag.<sup>51</sup> Fortunately, this interpretation of Nakano remains a fringe phenomenon.

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<sup>48</sup> Among others, SIPE published "Research on International Secret Powers" (国際秘密戦力の研究) and the "Jewish Research" (ユダヤ研究)

<sup>49</sup> According to the NSJAP, General Nobutaka Shioden also contributed articles to "*Der Stürmer*" a German-language Nazi-paper.

<sup>50</sup> Their Platform reads: 1. We should establish a moral state as a national community on the basis of the idea of National Socialism. 2. We should exclude the internationalism which runs counter to the national polity of Japan and should demand a leading autocratic regime over Japan. 3. We should recover our self-determination of the real independent nation and should protect our fatherland and our folk from foreign powers which are conspiring to have a (*sic!*) control over the world. 4. We should reconfirm the excellence of Japanese race, preserving the purity of our blood, and contribute to freedom of the world. (again see [www.nsjap.com](http://www.nsjap.com)).

<sup>51</sup> The party is also concerned with saving Japan's racial homogeneity, which is threatened by "foreigners ... especially from Asian Continent, Africa and so on... Southeast Asian prostitutes carrying AIDS, Iranian drug dealers, Chinese robbers, North Korean communists, and Blacks...". However, (according to the NSJAP) the greatest threat to the Japanese nation are the Jews who "control" the Federal Government of the USA. While "there are few Jews themselves and there are no Jews in the Japanese government of today .... the Jewish corporations are invading the country .... Besides, they have succeeded in taking over the Imperial Household of Japan." Freemasonry is another threatening power which has taken over the Imperial Household (Emperor Akihito, Crown Princess Masako, Prince Mikasa are all Freemasons according to the NSJAP.) while "the number of Freemasons in the Diet has been getting larger since the end of WW2". The party maintains relations with neo-Nazi organizations in other countries, especially in Germany, with which it has established a "New Axis". The activities of the NSJAP include demonstrations in front of the Israeli and American embassies, support of neo-Nazis abroad (mainly Germany but also the USA), military training of its members, putting ads in national newspapers, and offering volunteers to fight on the side of Iraq during the First Gulf War. (again see [www.nsjap.com](http://www.nsjap.com)).

### **Nakano, Liberal and Democrat and Fascist**

The second generation of Nakano's biographers finally tried, in the latter half of the Shōwa period (1965–91), to bring the many contradictory sides of his career together in their accounts. As opposed to Ogata's biography of Nakano written in 1951, these writers (including Nakano's son Yasuo and some of Nakano's followers), not only covered the whole of Nakano's life but also devoted a commensurate amount of pages to Nakano's fascist period (although his suicide still received disproportionate emphasis).<sup>52</sup> While these accounts mentioned Nakano's fascist period, however, they failed to integrate and reconcile it with what came before and after. Nakano the liberal, anti-militarist democrat and Nakano the militarist fascist had finally made into the same book(s), but they remained juxtaposed against one another without being worked into one. Accordingly, the many contradictions in Nakano's character and political positions remained unsolved. To some extent this may be a simple reflection of the fact Nakano, like most people, was himself contradictory and the various sides of his personality cannot be resolved into a harmonious whole. . To some extent, however, it is probably due to the fact that the second generation of biographers was still too close to Nakano to see not only his contradictory sides, but also that which unified them.

Perhaps it is a coincidence that the first successful attempt to integrate Nakano's contradictions and find unifying continuities had to wait until after the end of the Shōwa period, when Muro Kiyoshi, a professor at Waseda University, published his interpretations of Nakano's

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<sup>52</sup> After Ogata's 1951 work on Nakano, the first to attempt a biography of Nakano's life was Inomata, Keitarō, "The life of Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛の生涯], (Nagoya, 1964). The work (often quoted in the forgoing pages) gave due attention to Nakano's thought and activities in the 1930s. It was followed by the two-volume biography by Nakano's son, Nakano Yasuo, "Nakano Seigō: The Politician" [中野正剛政治家], 2 vols., (Tokyo, 1971) which likewise deals with Nakano's fascist years head on. The same goes for later biographies. See Tatamiya, Eitarō [田田宮英太郎], "Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛], (Tokyo: Shinjimbutsu Orai-sha [新人物往来社], 1975) and Hinoshita, Tōgo [日下藤吾], "The way of lion: Nakano Seigō" [獅子の道中野正剛], (Tokyo, 1986).

life.<sup>53</sup> I am greatly indebted to Muro's work and hope to have shown in the previous pages that, while spectacular, dramatic and often seemingly contradictory, the volatile movements of Nakano's life were often not as stark as the labels would suggest. His attitude toward the military was fairly constant, even if it led him to oppose Tanaka and Tōjō while supporting Ishiwara. While the former earned him the label anti-militarist, the latter caused him to be called the army's mouthpiece.

Some of the discontinuities in his career seem superficial when viewed against the many continuities that span his life, such as his worship of charismatic figures; his desire to integrate the Japanese people into the political process through a mass party; his anti-colonial pan-Asianist stance; his dislike for England and attraction to Germany; his revolutionary romanticism; and, finally, his deep dislike for Japan's established elites, especially the bureaucrats. If we ignore for a moment the fact these continuities still leave some irreconcilable contradictions in Nakano's words and actions and focus on the broad strokes of this otherwise confusingly agitated picture, what do we see?

Nakano was a challenge to the existing order, the status quo and the political settlement reached after the Meiji Restoration. On one level, the unifying theme of Nakano's life was a dream of a popular mass party that would sweep away the Japanese political establishment to finally realize and complete the unfulfilled populist aspirations of the Meiji Restoration expressed in the Charter Oath. Fascism for Nakano was just another means of achieving that overarching aim.

Nakano's opposition to the established order – during both his liberal and fascist periods – also follows a larger pattern of political opposition that can be traced back to the Meiji restoration. His life Nakano's can be read as part and extension of that tradition. Some of the most formidable challenges to Japan's domestic political order had presented themselves often in

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<sup>53</sup> Muro Kiyoshi [室潔], "Topple Tōjō – An Appraisal of Nakano Seigō" [東条討つべし 中野正剛評伝], (Tokyo: Asahi News Publishing [朝日新聞社], 1999).

combination with demands for a hard-line in foreign affairs. Such was the Restorationist challenge of the *bakumatsu* years, which rallied anti-*bakufu* opposition under the slogan “Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians”. The samurai who swelled the ranks of the Satsuma rebellion under Saigō Takamori, were frustrated over their loss of status, but officially rebelled over the question of invading Korea. The Meiji Freedom and Popular Rights activists demanded not only a constitution and a parliament but also a hard-line stance *vis-à-vis* the Western Powers and the revision of the unequal treaties. The popular will expressed by some rally organizers during the Hibiya riots demanded not only tax cuts and the freedom to assemble, but also hegemony in Asia.<sup>54</sup> The riots themselves had been triggered by what many considered the unsatisfactory outcome of the peace negotiations ending the Russo-Japanese War. In each instance, a compelling if superficial logic led agitators to combine foreign policy issues with domestic ones - namely that if the people “were to pay for empire and die for it, their voice should be respected in politics”<sup>55</sup> A deeper contradiction remained, of course, in demanding less taxes, more canons and more butter simultaneously.

Despite all the contradictions of Nakano’s life, it is possible to see his as one possible continuation of this pattern of opposition. What makes Nakano’s position peculiar is his stress on the importance of a mass movement. At the risk of oversimplification, Nakano’s life slogan could have been “Expel the barbarians (from East Asia) and revere the people”. His reaction to the Versailles Treaty negotiations or, more generally, his criticism of Japan’s government for being too servile toward England and America was combined with a call for universal suffrage and the extension of citizens’ rights to the Empire’s subjects in Korea. He continued along the same lines during his fascist period, combining a hard-line stance in foreign affairs, especially against England and America, with a push for more participatory mass politics at home. His political

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<sup>54</sup> See Andrew Gordon, “A Modern History of Japan”, (Oxford, 2003), p. 131.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

contradictions were thus also continuous. While advocating hard-line foreign policies *vis-à-vis* the powers and the establishment of an autark national defense state, he opposed higher taxes, the inflationary effects of ballooning military budgets and the imposition of economic controls through Japan's bureaucracies. In October 1942, while deploring the state's infringement on civil rights after the outbreak of the Pacific War and making a stance for freedom in front of the students of Waseda University, Nakano also said: "The freedom of the Japanese people is the freedom to voluntarily serve the Emperor. It is the freedom of martyrdom."<sup>56</sup>

Politically, Nakano's challenge was never a formidable one to Japan's established elites, as he was not very skilled at gaining, holding and exercising political power. Nakano during most of his career was ignored by the establishment, or, at best, perceived as a nuisance. When Tōjō eliminated Nakano, it was not because Nakano threatened the established order, but because he had come to defend that order against Tōjō's attempt to alter it. The intellectual challenge that Nakano posed was thus much stronger than the political one, though the strength of his ideas became visible only in the post-war period, when many of his aims have not only been realized, but have come to be accepted as natural traits of modernity. In international affairs, the post-war period saw the process of de-colonization and the establishment of an economic order that, at least nominally, aims to give all nations free access to the world's resources and markets. Likewise, Japan's domestic politics are characterized by popular mass parties, female suffrage and popular sovereignty (as opposed to the Meiji Constitution that placed sovereignty with the Emperor). Each innovation lies at the foundation of Nakano's thought.

What is important is not why Nakano failed to make his challenge more appealing, why he failed to realize his program of modernization or whether he would actually have realized his aims had his mass movement become a force in Japanese politics during his lifetime (or whether, like so many populists before him, he would have betrayed the people once they had swept him

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<sup>56</sup> Nakano Seigō "To raise the realm alone" [天下一人もって興る], speech held at Waseda University, November 10, 1942, quoted in Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 674.

into power). What is important is that Nakano failed. His failure has at least two grave implications for modern Japan.

First, the failure of fascism from below in Japan ensured that the country missed one more chance for discontinuity. This missed opportunity becomes clear by contrasting Japan's experience with that of Germany, where - as Dahrendorf pointed out - the social structure had been shaken up by the stress of mobilization for WW1, by defeat and revolution after that war, by the interwar crisis and the rise of Nazism and mobilization for WW2 before defeat and occupation after 1945 resulted in a final breakdown of the socio-political structure.<sup>57</sup> Along the way, the upheaval unseated and replaced important elements of Germany's elites. Defeat in WW1 sent the monarchy into exile and reduced the influence of the army and aristocracy. The interwar crisis hollowed out the middle-class, while the Nazis, once in power, systematically annihilated the Jewish population along left-leaning intellectuals and political activists as well as other minorities. The aristocracy took a final blow after July 1944. After Germany's defeat in 1945, the Allies disposed at least partially of the Nazi leadership. Only the non-Jewish staffs of Germany's bureaucracies and its business community survived the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with some semblance of continuity.

Japan's history, by contrast, displays more continuity, which may be due either to the fact that the stress experience was weaker or that its socio-political structure was stronger. Japan would have markedly different in innumerable ways had a popular mass-movement as imagined by Nakano taken power and reformed Japan from below, but one obvious difference that bears mentioning is that the people, once emancipated (even if only superficially in Nakano's sense), would have become responsible for politics. Accordingly, it would have been impossible to put all the blame for Japan's disastrous entry into WW2 on Japan's military, as has often been done in popular accounts of the war.

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<sup>57</sup> See Ralf Dahrendorf, "Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland", (München, 1968).

Second, the failure of Nakano's idea of reforming Japan from within through a popular mass-movement meant that some of these reforms were carried out after Japan's humiliating defeat by the US occupation forces. The people of Japan were given a new democratic constitution, in which they were made sovereign. Mitamura speculated that Nakano's "ghost is probably smiling in his grave, as three thousand years of...autocratic feudal government have perished" and "a democratic revolution has dawned."<sup>58</sup> I wonder, however, whether Nakano would actually have smiled. Would he not, instead, have pointed out the irony of the fact that the Meiji Constitution had been handed down by Emperor Meiji, while the post-war constitution had been handed down by the U.S. occupation authorities? Perhaps Nakano would even have joined the regrettably large chorus of the many right-wing voices describing Japan's present constitution as something alien shoved onto the country from above [おしつけられた憲法]? And as to the idea of 'making the people sovereign', would he not have replied that there was no need for that, because the people are always and had always been sovereign, and that no constitution has either the power or the right to make or unmake such sovereignty? Would Nakano not rather deplore the fact that to this day, the Japanese people have failed to truly claim the sovereignty?

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<sup>58</sup> Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫], "Why did Nakano Seigō Commit Suicide?" [中野正剛は何故自刃したか], (Tokyo, 1949), all quotes taken from the preface.

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#### 1.3. Nakano Seigō's Speeches in the Imperial Diet

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“Legislative Bill for Laws to be Adopted in Taiwan” [台湾に施行すべき法令に関する法律案], January 30, 1921

“Concerning our Policy vis-à-vis Russia” [対露政策に関する件], February 6, 1921 (reprinted under the title “Advocating the Withdrawal from Siberia” [西伯利撤兵論], in Appealing to the People: A Collection of Speeches by Nakano Seigō [国民に訴う:中野正剛大演説集], Tokyo, April, 1929, p. 391 – 412)

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“Questions concerning the Government's Administrative Policies” [施政方針に関する質問演説], January 25, 1922

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<sup>1</sup> The character for "rei" is actually different from the one displayed here. The actual character should have the radical for "sun" on the left. The right half is correct.

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## Biographical Appendix

### Biographical Sketches of Key Figures in Nakano's Life

**Abe Isoo** [安部磯雄] (1865 - 1949), *social activist*. Born in Fukuoka, Abe entered the Dōshisha in 1879 and studied at the Hartford Seminary in the US from 1891 to 1894. Back in Japan, he entered the Unitarian Church and edited its organ the *Roku-Gō Zasshi* [六合雜誌]. Between 1899 and 1926 he taught at Waseda University, where he also founded the baseball club. While teaching at Waseda, Abe became also politically active. Having been influenced by socialist thought during a five-month study at the University of Berlin, he participated with socialists Kōtoku Shūsui [幸徳秋水] and Kinoshita Naoe [木下尚江] in the foundation of the Socialist Research Society [社会主義研究会] in 1898. In 1900 this became the Socialist Association [社会主義協会] with Abe serving as its president. In May of the following year, he founded, together with Kōtoku and Katayama Sen, Japan's first socialist party, the Social Democratic Party [社会民主党], which was prohibited two days after its foundation. Abe opposed the Russo-Japanese war from beginning to end, taking a Christian position within socialism. He founded the Japanese Fabian Society together with Ishikawa Sanshirō [石川三四郎] in 1924 and the Social Democratic Party in 1926. When, following the Manchurian Incident, party secretary Akamatsu Katsumaro attempted to change the party's position to that of National Socialism, Abe objected fiercely. He likewise never warmed to the idea of merging the party with Nakano's Tōhōkai. Maintaining his socialist and anti-military stance, Abe in 1940 left the Social Mass Party, which succeeded the Social Democratic Party. After the war, he founded the Japan Socialist Party [日本社会党]. (For Nakano's relation with Abe see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 471-2, vol. 2, p. 371-79.)



**Adachi Kenzō** [安達謙蔵] (1864 - 1948), *politician and head of the Minseitō faction to which Nakano belonged in the late 1920s*. Born in Kumamoto Province, Adachi studied at the Seiseikō [済々こゝ] under Sassa Tomofusa [佐々友房]. After finishing his education, he spent some time in Korea, where he published the *Korea News* [朝鮮時報] and the *Seoul Gazette* [漢城新報]. In 1895, he was allegedly involved in the Minbi Assassination Incident and arrested, but he was never put on trial. Starting with the general election of 1902, he was elected a total of 14 times to the Diet, a feat that earned him the nickname “God of Elections” [選挙の神様]. After belonging to the Imperial Party [帝国党], the Daidō Club [大同倶楽部], and the Central Club [中央倶楽部], he participated in the formation of the Rikken Dōshi-Kai [立憲同志会] and, in 1916, in the foundation of the Kenseikai [憲政会]. He served as Minister of Communications in the Katō and Wakatsuki cabinets. During the same period, he contributed to the merger of the Kenseikai [憲政会] with the Seiyū-Hontō [政友本党], leading to the formation of the Minseitō [民政党]. Within the Minseitō, Adachi led Nakano’s faction, which opposed the bureaucratic faction led by Egi Tasuku [江木翼]. In 1929, Adachi was made Minister for the Interior in the Hamaguchi Cabinet. After the Manchurian Incident, Adachi (at Nakano’s urging) became involved in the Movement for a Cooperation Cabinet between the Minseitō and the Seiyūkai. When the project miscarried, Adachi and Nakano left the Minseitō to found the Kokumin Dōmei, or National League [国民同盟]. Adachi became President and led the party until 1940, when it was dissolved to join the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, in which Adachi served as a consultant. In 1942, Adachi withdrew from politics. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 371-73, 429-38, 531-34, 555-559, and especially p. 620-648. For Adachi’s views on Nakano see Adachi Kenzō [安達謙蔵], “The Autobiography of Adachi Kenzō” [安達謙蔵自叙伝], Tokyo, 1960, p. 268-69.)

**Akao Bin** [赤尾敏] (1899 - 1990), *right-wing activist and politician*. Born in Nagoya city, Akao did not finish middle school. A socialist in his young years, he tried in vain to establish a commune on Miyake Island. In 1921, he joined the Tōkai Farmers' League. Accused and then imprisoned for violently soliciting contributions for the union, Akao converted [転向] in 1925. Influenced by Mussolini, Akao aimed for an Emperor-centered nationalism. With the help of Tsukui Tatsuo, he established the National Construction Society [建国会], in which he first served as secretary and later as president. In 1942, he was elected to the Diet without the government's endorsement. It was during that time that he and Nakano drew closer to one another in their opposition to Tōjō. After the war, he was purged from public office. In 1951, he founded the Greater Japan Patriotic Party [大日本愛国党] and served as its president. In the post-war period, he was known for his vociferous rearmament, pro-American and anti-Soviet stances, as well as for his frequent arrests and public speeches. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 651 and vol. 2, p. 707 and 726.)

**Akashi Motojirō** [明石元二郎] (1864 - 1919), *Army officer*. Born as the second son of a former samurai of the Kuroda-han in Fukuoka, Akashi entered the Shūyūkan and from there proceeded to the Army War College, graduating in 1899. A gifted linguist, he is said to have mastered, English, French, and Russian and to have had a reasonably good understanding of German. After the turn of the century, he spent time in Europe, serving as military *attaché* to the embassy in France and Russia. According to some rumors, Akashi is said to have met with Lenin in Geneva during the Russo-Japanese war and been responsible for channelling army funds to Russian revolutionaries with the intention of weakening the Russian home front. From 1910, Akashi served as the chief of the military police or *kempeitai* under Governor Terauchi (who also was Akashi's father-in-law) in Korea. It was in this capacity that he crossed paths with Nakano. It was perhaps their common background (Fukuoka, Shūyūkan alumni and connections to the

Genyōsha) that made Nakano take an immediate liking to Akashi, who was the only official in the colonial administration to receive a positive treatment in Nakano's reports from Korea. In 1915, Akashi became commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division and, in 1918, the 7<sup>th</sup> governor of Taiwan. He died in 1919 while visiting his hometown, Fukuoka. (For Nakano's description of Akashi see Nakano Seigō, "The Governor General's Policies" [総督政治論] in "Manchuria and Korea as I saw them" [我が観たる満鮮], Tokyo, 1915, p. 51 but also Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 130-146.)

**Akita Kiyoshi** [秋田清] (1881 - 1944), *politician*. Born in Tokushima Prefecture, Akita graduated from Nihon Hōritsu Gakkō (today Nihon Daigaku) in 1901. Through an introduction by Akiyama Teisuke [秋山定輔], he entered the *Niroku Shimpō* [二六新報社]. Elected as a representative in parliament in 1912 for the first time, he was subsequently re-elected 10 times. He joined Inukai's Kakushin Club and later advocated merging with the Rikken Seiyūkai, which earned him the label of a schemer. In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, he participated with Nakano in the movement for a cooperative cabinet [協力内閣運動] that did not ultimately materialize. In 1934, he left the Seiyūkai, resigned from his position as Head of the House of Representatives [衆院議長] and became a vociferous advocate for the abolishment of the established parties and the creation of a new political movement. Thereafter he moved close to Konoe Fumimaro and participated in the new party movement. Akita became councilor in the first Konoe cabinet, Minister of Health and Welfare in the Abe cabinet and Minister of Overseas Development [拓省] in the second Konoe cabinet. From 1942, he served as advisor to the Imperial Rule Political Association [翼賛政治会顧問]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p.397-99, and vol. 2, p. 416-17.)

**Akiyama Teisuke (Sadasuke)** [秋山定輔] (1868 - 1950) *politician and journalist*. Born in

Okayama prefecture, Akiyama graduated from the faculty of law of Tokyo Imperial University in 1890 and initially worked as a bureaucrat. He founded the *Niroku Shimpō* [二六新報] in 1893 and gained some fame for attacking the Mitsui Zaibatsu. First elected to the Diet in 1902, he gave up his seat during the Russo-Japanese war because he was suspected of being a spy. He maintained friendly relations with Sun Yat-sen, Miyazaki Tōten and Chiang Kai-shek, making him a political power broker who wielded behind-the-scenes influence on Chinese policy (Akiyama's sobriquet was "the old man of Kōjimachi"). After the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese war in 1937, he tried to facilitate negotiations of a localized settlement through Miyazaki Ryūsuke but was arrested by the *kempeitai* (military police). During the Konoe administration, Akiyama (who had always been close with Konoe) worked with Akita Kiyoshi and others for the New Party Movement under Konoe. Akiyama participated in the movement to unite the right wing and form a new party, but in mid-1938 his good relations with Chiang Kai-shek prompted rumors that he was actually a paid spy of the Chinese nationalist government. In August 1938, Home Minister Suetsugu had him placed under police surveillance. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 57, 356 and 370.)

**Amano Tatsuo** [天野辰夫] (1892 - 1974), *lawyer, right-wing politician, activist in the national socialist movement*. Born in the city of Hamamatsu of Shizuoka-ken, Amano graduated from the faculty of law of Tokyo Imperial University. In 1926 Amano earned some notoriety for breaking up strikes (notably one at his father's musical instrument factory). In 1927, Amano was one of the central founders of the All Japan Comrades of National Rising Society [全日本興国同志会] that opposed the Shinjinkai [新人会]. In 1929, he and Maeda Torao [前田虎雄] founded the Patriotic Workers and Employees Party [愛国勤労党]. In 1933, he was involved in planning the Shimpeitai Incident [神兵隊], a terrorist incident that aimed to bring about a Shōwa Restoration [昭和維新]. In 1941, he was implicated in a plot to assassinate Hiranuma [平沼国

務相狙撃事件], but he was pardoned in 1942. Nakano's junior by seven years, Amano had known and been friends with Nakano since the days of the *Tōhōjiron*. Like Nakano, Amano had also opposed the amendment of the Wartime Criminal Law. In early 1943, he published an article so critical of Tōjō in the *Ishin Kōron* that the sale of the magazine was prohibited. On that occasion, he was also arrested and interrogated by the police. In the course of 1943, he cooperated with Nakano in the Senior Statesmen scheme to overthrow Tōjō. In the post-war period, Amano continued to be active in the right-wing circles. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 741-44 and vol. 2, p. 708-15, and p. 735-49.)

**Aoki Sakuo** [青木作雄] (1898 - ?), *politician and member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Yamaguchi prefecture, Aoki graduated from Hitotsubashi University and first worked in business and finance before entering local and then national politics. Joining the Tōhōkai around 1936-37, he was first elected to the Diet in 1937 but failed to be re-elected in 1942. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol.2, p. 245 and p. 372.)

**Asō Hisashi** [麻生久] (1891 - 1940), *social activist and politician*. Born in Ōita prefecture, Asō graduated from the faculty of law of Tokyo Imperial University in 1917. He then worked as a reporter for the *Tokyo Daily News* and earned some fame with a series of articles supporting the Russian Revolution entitled "From Peter to Lenin." In 1918, he participated in the foundation of the Shinjinkai at Tokyo Imperial University. In October of 1920, he got involved in the mining labor movement. After participating in various socialist organizations and parties, Asō became the general secretary of the Social Mass Party [社会大衆党] created in 1932. From this time onward, Asō advocated a socialist revolution carried out in combination with the military. Elected in the February 1936 and April 1937 elections, Asō supported full-scale war with China, thus changing

the fundamental direction of the Socialist Mass Party after 1937. In 1939, he was involved in the failed attempt to merge the Social Mass Party with Nakano's Tōhōkai. When the Social Mass Party broke apart over the question of excluding Saitō Takao [斎藤隆夫] for his anti-militarist speech in the Diet in February 1940, Asō became head of the committee succeeding Abe Isō [安部磯雄]. In the same year he participated actively in Konoe's New Party Movement. During Konoe's second cabinet, Aso served as member of the preparatory committee of the New Structure but soon thereafter became ill and died. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 355-385)

**Atariyama Kiyoshi** [当山清] (1901 - 1980), *businessman and secretary of the Japan Labor League* [日本労働総同盟]. Atariyama first met Nakano during the latter's presidency of the Communications Union, of which Atariyama was a member. He later joined Nakano's Tōhōkai. (See Nagai, Kazuo; "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 425.)

**Awatani Yūzō** [淡谷悠蔵] (1897 - ?) *popular movement activist and politician*. Born in Aomori prefecture into a merchant family, Awatani embarked on a career in agriculture in 1919. Around the same time he also started to publish a Japanese poetry magazine. From 1926 onward, he became active in the farmers' movement and in 1928 participated in the foundation of the Aomori chapter of the All-Japan Farmers' Union [全国農民組合], becoming the chapter's head in 1929. In 1935 he was arrested but not prosecuted for breach of the Peace Preservation Law. After the dissolution of the All-Japan Farmers' Union in 1938, he saved the organization by transferring it to the Aomori Prefecture Workers and Farmers' Union [青森県勤労農民組合] joining the Japan Farmers' League [日本農民連盟] and thus bringing it under the umbrella of the Tōhōkai. In 1939, he was arrested again and imprisoned for 8 months. In the same year, he also

participated in the foundation of the East Asian League Association [東亜連盟協会]. After the war, Awatani co-founded the Japan Farmers' Union and became one of its central committee members. In 1953, he was elected to the Diet as a member of the Socialist Party. (See Nagai, Kazuo; "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 425.)

**Baba Motoharu** [馬場元治] (1902 - 1968), *politician and member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Nagasaki prefecture, Baba studied at Tokyo Imperial University and then worked as a lawyer before serving on the Nagasaki City Assembly. First elected to the national Diet in 1936 (subsequently re-elected 10 times), he joined Nakano's Tōhōkai and as a member of that party was re-elected in 1937, but not in 1942. After the war, he served as Minister of Construction in the third Hatoyama cabinet in 1955. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 245.)

**Baba Tsunego** [馬場恒吾] (1875 - 1956), *journalist and political commentator*. Born in Okayama prefecture, Baba studied at Dōshikai [同志会神学校] and then studied politics at the precursor to Waseda University. He withdrew before graduating in order to work for the *Japan Times*. In 1909, he traveled to the US, where he worked as editor of the *Oriental Review*, a magazine aimed at introducing Asia to a Western readership. In 1913, he returned to Japan, where he first worked again for the Japan Times and then for the *Kokumin Shimbun* until 1924. It was for the *Kokumin Shimbun* that he covered the Paris Peace Conference, an experience which greatly increased his interest in politics. After his return in 1919, he participated in the foundation of the Reconstruction League [改造同盟] (of which Nakano also was a member) and became active in the universal suffrage movement. In 1926, Baba participated in the foundation of the

Social Democratic Party [社会民衆党] and subsequently acted as an advisor to the party. During the WW2, Baba was prohibited to write or publish due to his liberal and anti-militaristic views. After the war, he was elected to the House of Peers, but also worked as the head of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, a position he held until 1951. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 216, 283, 338-42 and 396 as well as vol. 2, p. 230 and 251.)

**Bose, Rash Bihari** (1886 - 1944 or 1945), *leader of the Indian Independence movement*. Bose escaped from India in 1915 and fled to Japan, where he was sheltered by Tōyama Mitsuru, as the Japanese authorities wanted to extradite him to England. When, upon returning from England in 1919, Nakano visited Tōyama, he also met Bose for the first time. During the WW2, Bose collaborated with Japan as president of the Indian Independence League [インド独立連盟]. In July 1939, Bose spoke at the Tōhōkai national convention. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 720-26, and vol. 2, p. 412-15 and 589.)

**Bose, Subhas Chandra** (1897 - 1945), *Indian politician and prominent member of the independence movement, opponent of Gandhi*. Bose tried to achieve Indian independence during WW2 with German and Japanese help. He cooperated with the Japanese army's operation in Imphal (north-eastern India), which ended in a disaster. Bose died in an accident in Taiwan. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 719.)

**Cole, George Douglas Howard** (1889 - 1959), *economist, political scientist, historian and writer of detective novels*. Born in Cambridge England, Cole studied at Oxford, where he was drawn to socialist thought and joined the Fabian Society. He became a conscientious objector during WW1. While campaigning against conscription, he met his future wife, Margaret Postgate with whom he would write many detective novels. After working as a journalist for the Guardian, he became a professor of economics at University College, Oxford, in the mid-1920s. In addition



to his detective novels, Cole authored numerous works on history, politics and economics. Much of Cole's work, but especially "The Next Ten Years in British Social and Economic Policy" (London, 1929), influenced Nakano in the formulation of both his privatization proposal of the Japanese telecommunications network and his economic interventionist policies during the 1930s. The Japanese translation of the book, prepared by Shimizu Motohisa [清水元寿] and published in 1931 under the title "State control of the Economy,"[経済の国家統制] (Tokyo, Senkura Shobō, 1931) owed its existence to Nakano, who approached Senkura Publishing and recommended that the book be translated into Japanese for a wider audience. The translation also contained a preface by Nakano. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 576-84, and 801-809.)

**Dan Takuma** [團琢磨] (1858 - 1932), *Japanese businessman and director of the Mitsui Zaibatsu*. Born into a samurai family in Fukuoka, he was adopted in to the Dan family at age 12. Like Nakano, he entered the domain's Shūyūkan middle school. In 1871, together with Kaneko Kentarō (who was to become a life-long friend and Dan's brother-in-law), he joined the Iwakura mission to the West. Dan stayed in the US to study and eventually graduated from MIT with a concentration on mining. Upon his return to Japan, Dan taught mining engineering at Tokyo Imperial University. From 1884, he helped the government in developing the Miike Coal Mine. When the mine was sold to the Mitsui Concern in 1888, he transferred there, becoming head of the Mitsui Miike Coal Company. Partly thanks to Dan's efforts and competence, the company soon become the cash cow with in the Mitsui conglomerate. This facilitated Dan's rise to the Zaibatsu's top in 1914. Dan was assassinated on March 5, 1932 by right-wing nationalists during the League of Blood Incident [血盟団事件]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 654-62, 770 and vol. 2, p. 339.)

**Egi Tasuku** [江木翼] (1873 - 1932), *politician*. Born in Yamaguchi prefecture, Egi graduated from Tokyo Imperial University's faculty of law in 1897. In the same year he was adopted by Egi Kazuyuki (also from Yamaguchi), a bureaucrat and Minister of Education in the Kiyoura cabinet. Egi started his career as a bureaucrat, rising quickly through the ranks and eventually serving as cabinet secretary in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Katsura cabinet. Egi participated in the foundation of the Dōshikai (later Kenseikai, then Minseitō) and within these parties was one of the central figures of the bureaucratic faction. He served as chief cabinet secretary in the second Ōkuma cabinet and the Katō Kōmei cabinets. In 1916, he was selected to sit in the upper house. Instrumental in the formulation of the universal suffrage law, Egi became Minister of Justice in the Katō cabinet. He continued to serve in this position in the first Wakatsuki cabinet, but was forced to resign over the Bokuretsu Incident. Within the Minseitō, Egi's bureaucratic faction opposed Adachi's pure-party faction, to which Nakano belonged. Egi died while serving again in the second Wakatsuki cabinet but died of disease. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 371, 400, and 552.)

**Eguchi Sadae** [江口定條] (1865 - 1946), *businessman and politician*. Born in Kōchi prefecture, Eguchi studied at the Tokyo School of Commerce (東京高商) (present-day Hitotsubashi University), and after graduating stayed there as a teacher/lecturer. In 1891, he entered Mitsubishi trading company, where he served in different positions before becoming president in 1920. It was around this time that Eguchi became a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank. In 1931, Eguchi served as vice-president of the South Manchurian Railway, but he was removed from that post in 1932 by the Inukai cabinet because of his affiliation with the Minseitō. In 1932, Eguchi was appointed to the house of peers. (Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 610 and p. 710.)

**Féng Guózhāng** [馮國璋] (1859 - 1919), *Army general and politician in early republican China whom Nakano met in China in 1918*. Born into a peasant family in Hebei province, Zheng, though gifted, was unable to complete his education due to lack of money and therefore became a professional soldier. Attracting the attention of his superiors, Feng was recommended to the Military Academy. Protected by his mentor Yuan Shikai, Feng rose through ranks, but broke with Yuan when the latter sought to become emperor. Feng served the Nanjing government, opposing Yuan. Nakano met with Feng during his trip to China in 1918. During the meeting the two men started discussing Communism and the debate got so heated that Feng had Nakano kicked out of his quarters.

**Fujise Masajirō** [藤瀬政次郎] (1867 - 1927), *businessman and Nakano's financial backer*. Born in Nagasaki, Fujise entered Mitsui Trading Company in 1885 and was posted to Hong Kong and Shanghai. He later branched out into the textile industry. Fujise was a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank around 1920. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 219, 235, 499 and 607.)

**Furuya Yoshitaka** [古屋慶隆] (1879 - 1945), *politician and member of the Kokumin Dōmei*. Born into a typical *meibō-ka* family in Gifu prefecture, Furuya studied law at Meiji University. Running for election as a non-affiliated candidate in 1915, he was immediately elected to the Diet and continued to hold a seat there until the end of his life (with the exception of the period 1928-32, after he lost the election of 1928). He first joined the Rikken Dōshikai, then the Kenseikai/Minseitō. He served as parliamentary vice-secretary of the Ministry of the Interior in the second Wakatsuki cabinet (1931). Following Adachi and Nakano, he left the Minseitō in 1932, but he soon returned to the Minseitō. After the dissolution of the parties, he served in the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. Furuya was killed during the March 10, 1945 air raid.

**Gorai Kinzō** [五来欣造] (1875 - 1944), journalist and expert on Germany. Born in Ibaraki prefecture, Gorai studied at Tokyo University before studying abroad. He later worked as journalist, eventually becoming editor at the *Yomiuri News* and professor at Waseda and Meiji University, making himself a name as a student of fascism. He supported Nakano during the 1930 election campaign. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 531.)

**Hakoda Rokusuke** [箱田 六輔] (1850 - 1888), *activist of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement and co-founder of the Genyōsha*. Born in Fukuoka as the second son of Aoki Zenpei, a samurai, Hakoda was later adopted into the Hakoda family. While studying at the Ginseng Field school of Takaba Osamu, he met Tōyama Mitsuru and Shintō Kiheita. In 1874, he participated in a revolt in Saga prefecture and in 1876 in the revolt of Hagi, for which he was imprisoned in Yamaguchi prefecture. After his release from prison, together with Tōyama Mitsuru, Shintō Kiheita and Hiraoka Kōtarō, he founded the Kōyōsha [向陽社], later renamed Genyōsha. Among the society's members, Hakoda perhaps more than any other became active in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, so much so that Itagaki Taisuke said about him: "As long as Rokusuke is there, the South East is safe." Hakoda took on leading roles in national organizations such as the Patriotic Society [愛国社] and the League for the Establishment of the Parliament [国会期成同盟]. In 1879, he went to Tokyo to submit a petition for the establishment of a parliament and the revision of the unequal treaties to the *genrō*. Following Hiraoka, Hakoda served as the second president of the Genyōsha. Often a man of few words, Hakoda became talkative when he drank - and he drank a lot. His death is surrounded by some mystery, as some claim that he died due to heart failure while rumors persist that he committed *harakiri* to protest the Genyōsha's shift from popular rights [民権] to government's rights [国権]. (See History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992, Seinan Kiden [西南記伝]; 1969 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 39-52.)

**Hanaya Tadashi** [花谷正] (1894 - 1957), *Army officer and member of the Tōhōkai think tank in the 1920s*. Born in Okayama prefecture, Hanaya graduated from the Army War College. Under Ishiwara Kanji, he was involved in the planning leading up to the Manchurian Incident of 1931. From 1939 onward, he served as military advisor to the puppet state of Manchūkuo. Later he became commander of the 55<sup>th</sup> regiment. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 768.)

**Haraguchi Hatsutarō** [原口初太郎] (1876 - 1949), *Army officer, politician and member of Nakano's Tōhōkai*. Born into a samurai family in Fukuoka, Hatsutarō was later adopted into the Haraguchi family. Ten years Nakano's senior, he went to the same Shūyūkan in Fukuoka but from there continued on to the Army Military Academy and later War College, graduating with excellent grades in 1907. He served as military *attaché* in London, participated in the siege of Tsingtao in 1914 and later in the Siberian intervention. Haraguchi was a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank around 1920. Serving as military *attaché* in the US, he was greatly impressed with that country's industrial strength and henceforth opposed any notion of waging war against the USA. After retiring from active service in 1930, Haraguchi ran successfully for election in 1932 and subsequently was reelected 4 times. Acting as a spearhead against the IRAA in wartime Japan, he incurred the wrath of Tōjō Hideki. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 235 and 645 as well as vol. 2, p. 129-245.)

**Hasegawa Kōtarō** [長谷川光太郎] (1888 - ?), *journalist and capital markets expert*. Born in Shizuoka prefecture, Hasegawa graduated from Waseda University in 1914 and from there embarked on a career in journalism, working, among others for the *Hōchi News* [報知新聞] and the *Kokumin Shimbun*. After the war, he established himself as an expert on Japan's capital markets, writing books on the history of the stock exchange. Hasegawa was a member of

Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank.

**Hasegawa Shun** [長谷川峻] (1912 - ?), *journalist, politician and Nakano follower*. Born into a poor farming family in Miyagi prefecture, Hasegawa stayed at Nakano's dorm while a student at Waseda University. After graduating in 1932, he entered journalism, first working for the Newspaper Association [新聞連合社] and, from the fall of 1935 onward, as editor of the *Kyūshū Nippō* in Fukuoka (a job he got with Nakano's recommendation). After Nakano sold the paper to the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Hasegawa joined the editorial staff of Tōtairiku and was also responsible for advertising sales. Later Hasegawa joined Nakano's Tōhōkai and there worked in organizing the party's youth organization. Following the failed attempt to overthrow Tōjō, Hasegawa was imprisoned with Nakano in the fall of 1943 but unlike Nakano, who was released after several days, Hasegawa stayed in prison for 144 days. Elected to the Diet for the first time in 1953, Hasegawa served for a total of 12 terms. He also served as Minister of Labor in the Tanaka and Miki cabinets, minister of transport in the Nakasone cabinet and president of the Japan Bereaved Association [日本遺族会]. (See Hasegawa Shun [長谷川峻] "The master and the Yūkō-kyō" [先生と猶興居], in "Nakano Seigō is alive" [中野正剛は生きている], edited by Seigō-kai [正剛会], Tokyo: Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954, but also Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 663-4 and vol. 2, p. 693,707, and 784.)

**Hatoyama Ichirō** [鳩山一郎] (1883 - 1959), *politician, one of the few Japanese politicians to oppose the Imperial Rule Assistance Association during WW2*. Born in Tokyo as the son of lawyer and politician Hatoyama Kazuo [鳩山和夫], Hatoyama followed his father's footsteps, first working in the latter's law office and serving as a member of the Tokyo City Assembly before being elected to the national Diet in 1915. He served as cabinet secretary under Tanaka Gi'ichi and as Minister of Education in the Inukai and Saitō cabinets. During WW2, he

opposed the Imperial Rule Assistance Association and the Tōjō cabinet, which brought him to cooperate with Nakano. After the war, he founded the Japan Liberal Party and was about to form a cabinet when he was purged from public office. In 1954 he was more successful, forming a coalition cabinet between the Japan Democratic Party and the Liberal Democratic Party. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 408-11, p. 628-32, p.766-68 and 709-10 as well as vol. 2, p. 12-16, and p. 726-38.)

**Hatta Yoshiaki** [八田嘉明] (1879 - 1964), *politician and financier*. Born in Tokyo, Hatta graduated from the engineering department of Tōdai in 1903. After working for the Imperial Railway Bureau, he entered the Ministry of Communications, rising to the position of Vice-minister by 1926. Hatta later held ministerial portfolios in the first Konoe, Hiranuma and Tōjō cabinets, while at the same time serving as president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. During the war, Hatta tried to establish a wartime transport and telecommunications structure. Later he served as president of Imperial Petrol, and by the end of the war was an advisor to the Cabinet. Banned from public office by the occupation authorities, he later served as president of several industrial organizations.

**Hayashi Gonsuke** [林権助] (1860 - 1939) , *diplomat*. Born into a samurai family in Aizu domain, Hayashi entered the domain school, Nisshin-kan, at the age of seven. When in the following year both his father and grandfather died in the restoration wars, he became family head (in spite of his young age) and participated in the defence of besieged Wakamatsu castle against the imperial troops. The family fell on hard times after the restoration until Hayashi found a mentor in Kodama Sanefumi from Satsuma, who put him through school in Tokyo and took him to Satsuma, where young Hayashi witnessed the Satsuma Rebellion firsthand. After graduating from Tokyo Imperial University in 1887, Hayashi entered the Ministry of Foreign affairs, serving

in, among others, Shanghai, London, Seoul, and Rome. For his contribution to relations between Korea and Japan he was awarded the rank of baron in 1911. In 1916, he was made envoy to China, an appointment Nakano criticized strenuously. In 1920, he became ambassador to England and in the following year represented Japan at the League of Nations. After resigning from his ambassadorial duties in England in 1925, he stayed in that country to accompany Prince Yasuhito (the younger brother of The Shōwa Emperor) back to Japan following the death of the Taishō Emperor. In his latter years, Hayashi served as advisor to the Privy Council. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 238-46, and p. 283-84.)

**Hayashida Kametarō** [林田亀太郎] (1863 - 1927), *bureaucrat and politician*. Born as the son of a samurai serving the Kumamoto-han, he graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1887. In the same year he entered the Ministry of Justice. Elected to the Diet in 1920, Hayashida, like Nakano, was initially a member of the Mushozoku Club and then joined the Inukai's Kakushin Club in 1922. In 1925 he founded the Shinsei Club.

**Higashi Norimasa** [東則正] (1886 - ?), *journalist, China expert and founder of the Tōhōjiron magazine for which Nakano worked from 1917 to 1923*. Born in Kyoto in 1886, the same year as Nakano, Higashi entered Waseda University, graduating in 1905 - the same year as Nagai Ryūtarō. Following his interest in China, Higashi initially tried his luck in the shipping business operating the Tōshō Yōkō [東昌洋行] line between China and Japan, but his company failed after only three years in 1911. Thereafter he began work as a journalist for the *Jiji News* [時事新聞] and, in 1912, he started his own Chinese-language newspaper, the *China Daily* [中華日報], with support from Ōkuma Shigenobu. Simultaneously Higashi also conducted research and published reports on Chinese affairs. After the *China Daily* ran into political difficulties for its coverage of the third Chinese revolution, Higashi decided to start *Eastern Affairs*, or *Tōhōjiron*



[東方時論] the first issue of which appeared in September of 1916 - shortly after Nakano's return from Europe. Nakano contributed regularly to the magazine thereafter. With Higashi's deteriorating health, Nakano took on an ever more important role in running the magazine until its failure in 1923. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 214, 219, 235, 259, 266, and 422.)

**Hinoshita Tōgo** [日下藤吾] (1908 - ?), *Nakano's follower and author of a biography on Nakano.* Born in Fukuoka, Hinoshita frequented the Shūyūkan before going on to study economics at Tokyo Imperial University. He later worked in the research division of the Manchurian Railway and the Research Bureau of the Planning Board. In 1943 he participated in Nakano's scheme to overthrow the Tōjō cabinet. After the war, Hinoshita became a professor at Senshū University, Takushoku University and Aoyama University. (See his "The way of the Lion – Nakano Seigō" [獅子の道－中野正剛] Tokyo, 1986 as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 715-16, 736-38 and 750.)

**Hiraoka Kōtarō** [平岡浩太郎] (1851 - 1906), *political activist, coal baron and Member of Parliament.* Born in 1851 as the second son of the samurai in Fukuoka, Hiraoka - also known by his pen-name, Genyō [玄洋] - attended the domain's school, the Shūyūkan and Takaba Osamu's Ginseng-Field School. In 1875, together with Hakoda Rokusuke, he joined the Rectifying Aims Society [矯志社] founded by Takebe Koshirō [武部小四郎] in imitation of the Risshisha [立志社] of Kōchi. When, inspired by the Satsuma rebellion of 1877, 850 samurai of Fukuoka rose in revolt, Hiraoka followed their call and eventually joined Saigō's army, where he served in the staff office. After the suppression of the Satsuma rebellion, he was imprisoned in Tokyo for one year. Upon his release he joined the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. Together with Hakoda Rokusuke, Shintō Kiheita, and Tōyama Mitsuru, he founded the Kōyōsha [向陽社], which subsequently was renamed Genyōsha. Hiraoka served as the first president of

the society. At around the same time, he also entered the coal business, making a fortune operating the Chikuhō [筑豊] coal mines of northern Fukuoka prefecture, then Japan's largest. The money thus earned supported the varied activities of the Genyōsha, notably operations on the Asian mainland, as well as the society's organ, the *Kyūshū Nippō* [九州日報] founded in 1898. In 1984, Hiraoka was elected to the Diet and reelected six times. He was a cofounder of the Kenseitō [憲政党]. In 1903, he joined the Comrades' Society Against Russia [対露同志会] advocating a hard line against that country. Hiraoka died of heart failure in 1906. Hiraoka's nephew, Uchida Ryōhei, founded the Amur River Society [黒竜会], which became the Genyōsha's branch for affairs on the Asian mainland. (See History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992, Seinan Kiden [西南記伝]; 1969 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 47-56 and p. 220-21.)

**Honda Kumatarō** [本多熊太郎] (1874 - 1948), *diplomat*. Born in Wakayama prefecture, Honda studied at the Tokyo Law Institute [東京法学院 today's Chūō University] but left school before graduating. He entered the Foreign Ministry and participated in the peace negotiations at Portsmouth following the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. Honda served as a diplomat in Switzerland, Australia and England, and between 1923 and 1926 as ambassador to Germany. After retiring from the service in 1926, he came to be known as a hard-line commentator on foreign affairs, severely criticizing the Shidehara diplomacy. In 1940, he served once again as ambassador, this time to the Wang Ching-wei puppet regime established by the Japanese government in China. Prosecuted as a war criminal after WW2, Honda was purged from public office. Honda first met Nakano while the latter was posted as a news correspondent to Korea in 1913-14, later became a member of the Tōhōkai think tank and greatly influenced Nakano's views on foreign affairs. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 208-12, 666, and 685 as well as vol. 2, p.

211, 271, 335, and 416.)

**Honma Ken'ichirō** [本間健一郎] (1889 - 1959), *nationalist activist*. Having studied Chinese at Tōyō Kyōkai Senmon Gakkō (present-day Takushoku University), Honma first worked as a translator and later as a spy for the army on the Chinese mainland. In 1928, he established a private school in his native Ibaraki prefecture. Implicated in the May 15 incident, Honma was imprisoned for four years. In 1939, he established the Makoto-Musubi-Society, which cooperated with Nakano's Tōhōkai in opposing Tōjō. After the end of the war, Honma published his "Evict the Bureaucrats," [官僚追放] (Tokyo 1952) in which he also described his connection with Nakano. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 651-58 and p. 741-420.)

**Honryō Shinjirō** [本領信治郎] (1903 - 1971), *politician and member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Tokyo, Honryō studied at Waseda and later in Europe. He met Nakano during the latter's visit to Berlin in 1937-38. Greatly impressed by Nakano's interest in politics, upon returning to Japan, Honryō entered the Tōhōkai. He later served as head of the IRAA's propaganda bureau. In 1942, he was elected to the Diet as a member of the Tōhōkai. In the post-war era, he became an advisor to the Japan Democratic Party [日本民主党] and director of the Japan Rugby Association [日本ラグビー協会]. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 496-615.)

**Huang Xing** (Huang Hsing) [黃興] (1874 - 1916), *Chinese revolutionary*. Along with Sun Yat-sen, cofounder of the United League (Tongmeng Hui or T'ungmeng Hui) and leader of the overthrow of the Manchu Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty in 1911. As a student in Tokyo from 1902 to 1903, Huang met a number of anti-Manchu activists. Returning to Hunan, he founded the

Huaxing Hui (Hua-hsing Hui Society for the Revival of China). After a failed uprising he returned to Tokyo where, through Miyazaki Tōten, a Japanese sympathizer with the Chinese revolutionary cause, he was introduced to Sun Yat-sen. In 1905, they formed the Tongmeng Hui. In 1913, Huang and Sun led an unsuccessful revolt against Yuan Shikai, who became president of the new Chinese republic after the 1911 revolution and whose rule became increasingly authoritarian. Forced to flee to Japan, Huang broke with Sun over the latter's insistence on an oath of personal loyalty from all members of his newly organized (July 1914) Chinese Revolutionary Party. Nakano met Huang while a student at Waseda. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, 111-113, and vol. 2, p. 381-83.)

**Idei Seishi** [出井盛之] (1892 - 1975), *professor*. Professor of economics at Waseda University, who contributed articles to the *Kyūshū Nippō* after Nakano took over the management of the paper in 1928.

**Ikebe Sanzan** (池辺三山) (1864 - 1912), *journalist and Nakano's boss at the Asahi News*. Counted together with Tokutomi Sohō and Kuga Katsunan among the three great journalists of Meiji Japan, Ikebe was born in the city of Kumamoto in the province of Higo (present day Kumamoto prefecture) as the son of a samurai in the service of the Kumamoto domain. His father had joined the forces of Saigo Takamori during the Satsuma rebellion and following its suppression had been executed. Ikebe entered Keiō University, but could not graduate for lack of money. After a stint as journalist with the newspaper *Japan* [日本], he traveled to Europe. After his return, he worked as editor-in-chief of the *Osaka* and *Tokyo Asahi News*. There he was instrumental in bringing Natsume Soseki into the paper, and is often credited with having laid the groundwork for the paper's later success. Covering a broad spectrum of topics, Ikebe gained profile through his pro-war stance before and pro-government stance during the

Russo-Japanese War. He left the *Tokyo Asahi* in October 1911 and died one year later in 1912. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 85-86, 105-06, 115, and 142.)

**Inamura Ryūichi** [稲村隆一] (1898 - 1990), *farmers' movement activist and politician* (and elder brother of Inamaura Junzō [稲村順三], also a politician). Born in Hokkaidō, Inamura graduated from the Hokkai middle school in 1918 and from the faculty of politics and economics at Waseda University in 1923. At Waseda, he joined a leftist student group, the Kyōmin-kai [暁民会]. Already before his graduation he had become active in the farmers' movement (e.g. he co-founded a tenant union in Niigata). In 1922, he organized a rally on recognizing of Soviet Russia at which Nakano was invited to speak. The speech ended in a brawl described by Nakano in the August 1922 issue of *Tōhōjiron*. Inamura later entered the Japanese Communist Party and, in 1926, the Workers' and Farmers' Party [労働農民党]. Like many other left-wing activists, he was arrested on March 15, 1928. In 1932, he joined the Japan Socialist Party [日本社会党], with which he stayed until 1937, when he broke with the main faction of the party in order to found the Niigata chapter of the Japan Farmers' League [日本農民連盟], subsequently affiliated with Nakano's Tōhōkai in 1940. After the war, Inamura was purged from public office by the US occupation forces, but in 1955 he made his reentry into politics, founding the Japanese Socialist Party [日本社会党] and serving four periods as a member of parliament (affiliated with the Japan Socialist Party). He withdrew from politics in 1969. Inamura also wrote a short essay on Nakano. (See Nagai, Kazuo; "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101 and Nakano Yasuo, vol., 2, p. 337 and p. 425.)

**Inatomi Takato** [稲富稜人] (1902 - 1989), *farmers' activist, politician and Tōhōkai member*. Born in Fukuoka, Inatomi graduated from Waseda University. In 1916, he participated

in the foundation of Greater Japan Farmers' Union [全日本農民組合同盟] and became actively involved in tenant farmer disputes. Subsequently he belonged to the social democratic faction within the farmers' movement. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war he joined the Tōhōkai and ran as that party's candidate but failed to be elected in 1942 election. After the war, he participated in the formation of the Socialist Party. First elected to the Diet in 1946, he was subsequently re-elected 10 times. (See Nagai, Kazuo; "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101, 130-34.)

**Inui Shinbei** [乾新兵衛] (1862 - 1934 ), *businessman*. Born in Hyōgo prefecture into a house of sake brewers, Inui started a financial business in Kobe and later made a fortune in shipping during the Russo-Japanese War and WW1. According to Tanaka Gi'ichi, the money that Tanaka used to bribe members of the coalition supporting the Kenseikai cabinet under Katō Kōmei in 1925-6 came from contributions made by Inui and not from secret army funds, as alleged by Nakano. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 411 and p. 413.)

**Ishida Kazuto** [石田和外] (1903 - 1979), *judge*. Born in Fukui prefecture, Ishida graduated from Tokyo Imperial University and became a judicial officer in 1927. In September 1943, he presided over a case concerning the attempted assassination of Hiranuma, in which Nakano made a court appearance as a witness. Ishida protected Nakano against interference from the *kempeitai*, enabling him thus to speak publicly for a last time. After the war, Ishida rose through the ranks of the judicial system, serving as judge in various courts. Known as a conservative, Ishida often fought for the freedom and independence of the courts. After his retirement, Ishida served as president of the All Japan Kendō Association. (For Nakano's last public appearance in court see Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p.784.)

**Ishiwara Kanji** [石原 莞爾] (1889 - 1949) *army officer, Nakano's political ally in the early 1930s and, with Itagaki Seishirō, one of the chief architects of the Manchurian Incident.* Born into a samurai family in Yamagata prefecture, Ishiwara graduated from the Army Military Academy in 1909 and the Army War College in 1918. Between 1922 and 1925 he studied military history and strategic studies in Munich and Berlin. Influenced by Nichiren buddhism, Ishiwara developed the idea that a golden age would follow a period of world-wide conflict, in which Japan would fight at the head of Asia. Posted to Manchuria in 1928, Ishiwara started to plan the separation of that territory from China and eventually orchestrated the Manchurian Incident (with cooperation of Itagaki Seishirō), which provided Japanese forces with the pretext to occupy the whole of Manchuria and eventually establish a separate puppet state. This earned Ishiwara and Itagaki great popularity at home, and it was from around this time that Nakano associated with them. Since Ishiwara's action had been carried out without orders from Tokyo, he feared that he would be severely punished for it, but his popularity - especially among right-wing forces - protected him, and in the end he was rewarded and given the command of the fourth regiment in Sendai. In Sendai, Ishiwara also established a chapter of Nakano's Tōhōkai, at that point still a mixture of think tank and political party. In 1935, Ishiwara was made Chief of Operations of the Army General Staff, and in that position formulated a strategy according to which Japan should establish a national defense state. This would form the foundation for building an economic and military block with China and Manchuria. Based on that, Japan could then wage war against the Soviet Union. Once the Soviet Union had been vanquished, Japan should move on to liberate the Western colonies in Asia, which would put the country in a position to confront the United States. In 1937, Ishiwara was posted to Manchuria and there discovered that the Japanese puppet state he had helped bring about was a far cry from his ideals of Asian brotherhood. He severely criticized the commanding officers and confronted commander-in-chief Tōjō Hideki, who subsequently became Ishiwara's nemesis. As a result, he

was relieved of his duties and he returned to Japan. Although increasingly on the fringes of power, Ishiwara continued to write, publish and speak about strategic questions. The break with Nakano came over the Sino-Japanese War. While Nakano favored escalation of the conflict, Ishiwara opposed it. After publicly stating that Tōjō should be executed, Ishiwara was retired from active service. He returned to his native Yamagata, where he continued to write and studied on agriculture. After the war, Ishiwara was not tried as a war criminal, probably because he had opposed Tōjō, the war against China and the attack on Pearl Harbor. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 561-63, 610-12, 666-96, 714-23, and vol. 2, p. 83-88, 112-126, 143-45, 200-279, 333-353, and 501-03.)

**Itagaki Seishirō** [板垣征四郎] (1885 - 1948), *army officer and architect of the Manchurian Incident (with Ishiwara Kanji)*. Born in Iwate prefecture, Itagaki graduated from the Army Military Academy in 1904 and then fought in the Russo-Japanese war. After graduating from the Army War College, he served as military *attaché* to the Japanese embassy in China (1924-6), on the Army General Staff, and then again as commanding officer of an infantry regiment of the Guandong army in China. As chief of that army's intelligence section he cooperated with Ishiwara Kanji in orchestrating the Manchurian Incident, which provided the pretext for the occupation and separation of Manchuria from China. After the establishment of *Manshūkoku*, he served as military advisor to the puppet state. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, Itagaki took a leading part in various military campaigns in 1937-8. In 1938-9, Itagaki served as Army Minister in Tokyo, but returned to China from 1939-41. Made partly responsible for the defeat of Japanese troops at Nomohan against the Soviet Red Army, Itagaki was posted to command the Chosen in Korea. Itagaki was still commander of the Chosen army at the end of the war, when it was called upon to support the defense of Singapore and Malaya. Convicted as a class-A wartime criminal, he was hanged in 1948. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 666-67, p. 734-35, as well as vol. 2, p. 337-53, 411-419, and 502.)



**Itō Masanori** [伊藤正徳] (1889 - 1962), *journalist and commentator on military affairs, especially the Japanese Imperial Navy*. Born in Ibaragi prefecture, Itō attended Keiō University before working at the *Jiji News* [時事新聞]. He met Nakano in Paris in 1919 when covering the Peace Conference and after that the two men maintained friendly relationships. Itō frequently contributed articles to Nakano's magazines and on occasion would support him during election campaigns. As a journalist, Itō earned fame for his scoop of the termination of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1921. He is best known for his bestselling history of the Japanese navy's fate in WW2, titled "The End of the Combined Fleet". (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 216, 280, 535, and 688.)

**Itō Ushirō** [伊藤卯四郎] (1894 - 1974), *labor activist and politician*. Born in Nagasaki prefecture, Itō joined the labor movement as a Hokkaidō coal miner. In 1923, he returned to his native province and became active in the northern Kyūshū labor movement. He later joined the Social Mass Party. As member of a delegation of that party, he traveled to Germany on a tour of inspection in 1938 and came back with a rosy picture of conditions in Nazi Germany, which contributed to the Social Mass Party's shift to the right. After that he was a member of the Socialist Party and was elected to the Diet in 1946. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 355.)

**Izu Tomito** [伊豆富人] (1888 - 1978), *journalist*. Born in Kumamoto prefecture, Izu's life ran in many ways parallel to Nakano's. He too attended Waseda University and later worked at the *Asahi News*. He was Adachi Kenzo's secretary when the latter served as Minister of Communications. When Nakano took over the *Kyūshū Nippō* in 1928, Izu was one of the permanent staff members. In 1940, he became the president of the *Kyūshū Daily News* [九州日日新聞] and in 1942 of the *Kumamoto Daily News* [熊本日日新聞]. In 1953 he established

Kumamoto Radio.

**Kagesa Sada'aki** [影佐禎昭] (1893 - 1948), *military officer and member of the Tōhōkai think tank in the 1930s*. Born in Hiroshima, Kagesa graduated from the Army War College and from early on became one of the Army's specialists on Chinese affairs, serving on the general staff and as military *attaché* in Shanghai. He orchestrated the establishment of the Japanese puppet regime in China under Wang Ching-wei in 1943, becoming that government's military advisor. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2., p. 50.)

**Kamei Kan'ichirō** [亀井貫一郎] (1892 - 1987), *socialist politician, known for his good looks and the fact that he spoke seven languages*. Born in Kanagawa prefecture, Kamei graduated from the faculty of law of Tokyo Imperial University in 1917 and then entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After serving in Tientsin, China and New York as Consulate General, he retired from the Foreign Service in 1926 to become a politician. He ran as a candidate of the Social Democratic Party [社会民衆党] in the 1928 general election and won a seat in the Diet (he was subsequently re-elected 3 times). In 1932 he joined the Social Mass Party [社会大衆党]. From early on he maintained good relations with the military and in 1934 he contributed to the writing of the army pamphlet "Kokutai no hongī to sono kyōka no teishō." He supported Konoe's New Order Movement, and in 1938 Konoe put him in charge of creating a new mass party. In 1938, Kamei was part of a Social Mass Party delegation that traveled to Germany and came back with a positive picture of Nazi Germany that greatly contributed to the party's shift to the right. Kamei was also involved in the talks leading up to the failed merger between his party and Nakano's Tōhōkai. In 1940, he became president of East Asian Affairs in the IRAA. In 1942, he advocated an end to the war, was imprisoned for 8 months and was then put on probation for one year. After the war he was initially excluded from public office. Following his rehabilitation, he joined the

right-wing of the Socialist Party [社会党] but he had lost his influence by this time. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 471, vol. 2, 354-58, 370, 380, and 385.)

**Kaneko Kentarō** [金子賢太郎] (1853 - 1942), *bureaucrat and politician*. Born into a samurai family of the Fukuoka domain, he entered the domain's school, Shūyūkan, in 1863. On account of his outstanding grades, the domain's authorities allowed him to travel to Tokyo for further study in 1870. In 1871, he joined the Iwakura mission to the West. While the mission continued onto Europe, Kaneko was left in the US, where he enrolled at Harvard University to study law. After graduating in 1878, he returned to Japan. From 1886 onward, he participated in the drafting of the Meiji Constitution under Itō Hirobumi. In addition to various ministerial positions, Kaneko also served as member of the House of Peers, secretary of the Privy Council and head of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. He also founded Japan Law University (today's Nihon Daigaku).

**Kaneko Naokichi** [金子直吉] (1866 - 1944), *businessman and member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank in the 1920s*. Born in Kōchi Prefecture into a family so poor that he could not attend primary school, Kaneko started working at an early age. In 1886 he left for Kobe and found employment with Suzuki Iwatarō, specializing in sugar. After Suzuki's death, he took over the management, together with Yanagida Fujimatsu [柳田富士松], and expanded the company's operations to Taiwan. Drawing closer to Gotō Shimpei, then governor general of Taiwan, Kaneko was able to secure monopoly sales rights for camphor, which became the cash cow for the company's business. The abundant funds enabled Kaneko to expand the business into a global trading company with over 50 affiliated companies. Known as Suzuki General Trading House [鈴木総合商社商店], the concern was counted among the Zaibatsu like Mitsui or Mitsubishi. During WW1 Kaneko made great profit in cornering the iron market, but after the war his

fortunes declined, culminating in near- bankruptcy during the Shōwa financial crisis of 1927. Attempts to rebuild the company thereafter and return it to its former greatness failed. He gained national attention for his active role in the conclusion of the Japanese-American Iron Exchange Agreement [日米船鉄交換協定] and is also remembered for having developed the artificial silk and synthetic ammonia industries. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 89, 235, 438, and 696.)

**Kaneko Sessai** [金子雪齋] (? - ?), *educator*. Most of what we know about Kaneko Sessai we know through Nakano. Kaneko was born in Fukui prefecture, where he studied under Hashimoto Keigaku [橋本景岳] before going on to Western studies under Nakamura Keiu [中村敬宇] in Edo (present-day Tokyo). Subsequently, he worked as a proofreader at the *Hokumon News* [北門新聞] in Hokkaidō, then moved to Taiwan and lived there for nine years. Following the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, he traveled to the mainland and served as a translator and interpreter for the Japanese forces. At the end of the war, he vowed to build “a spiritual Japan in Manchuria” to which end he established in Dalian the “Rescue-the-East-School” [Shintō gakusha 振東学社] (accepting both Japanese and Chinese students) and the *Far Eastern Daily* [Taitō Nippō 泰東日報], a newspaper aimed at furthering Sino-Japanese understanding. After Kaneko’s death, the running of his school and newspaper were taken over by Nakano’s former university roommate, Abe Shingen [阿部真言]. (For a short biography of Kaneko see Nakano Seigō, “Expressions of the soul” [魂を吐く], Tokyo, May, 1938, p. 294-96, and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 305-315, 335, 359, 388, 392, 407, 609, 611-12, 643, 672-73, 760 and vol. 2, p. 252, 271, 476, and 758.)

**Kangyū Tsuneo** [簡牛凡夫] (1894 - ?), *politician*. Born in Fukuoka, Kangyū graduated from the department of political economy at Waseda University in 1920. In 1923, he went to

study in Germany. He later worked in the ministries of Communication, Finance, and Agriculture and Forestry. Originally a member of Nakano's faction in the Minseitō and Kokumin Dōmei, Kangyū was to run and lose against Nakano in the 1942 election. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 115 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 531, p. 642-46.)

**Katō Tokunari** [加藤徳成] usually known as Katō Shisho [司書] (1830 - 1865), *samurai of the Fukuoka-han and the center of Sonnō Jōi activism within the administration of the same domain during the Bakumatsu era*. During the first punitive expedition against Chōshū, he advocated the dissolution of the expedition army. He advanced to the position of *karō* [家老] in 1865. When the Tokugawa-loyalists got the upper hand, he was forced to resign and then commit ritual suicide [*seppuku*]. Katō was among the Genyōsha activists. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 46, 52, and 184.)

**Katsu Masanori** [勝正憲] (1879 - 1957), *bureaucrat and politician*. Born in Fukuoka prefecture, Katsu studied at Tokyo Imperial University, and then entered the Ministry of Finance. He was elected to the Diet for a total of six periods starting in 1928, first as a member of the Minseitō. He served as Minister of Communications under the Yonai cabinet. It was Katsu who on the day after Nakano's suicide motioned that the house issue a note of condolence. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 432.)

**Kawatsu Susumu** (also Kawatsu Sen) [河津暹] (1875 - 1943), *economist*. Born in Tokyo, Kawatsu graduated from Tokyo Imperial University and then became a lecturer, professor and eventually faculty head there. As an economist, he was known for his work on social policy and

marginal utility in pricing goods. He was a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank in the 1920s. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 235.)

**Kazami Akira** [風見章] (1886 - 1961), *journalist, politician, and Nakano's acquaintance*. Born in Ibaraki prefecture into a family of farmers, Akira enrolled at Waseda in 1905 where he met and befriended Nakano and Ogata. Kazami and Nakano were born on the same day, studied the same subjects at Waseda and shared a strong interest in Chinese affairs. After graduation their lives would run parallel courses, even if they were not continuously close to one another. Like Nakano, Kazami first worked as a journalist at the *Tokyo Daily News*, but soon left and became temporarily a broker. Later he returned to work at the *Osaka Asahi* and at the *Kokusai Tsūshin* [国際通信], then became editor-in-chief of the *Shinano Mainichi Shimbun* [信濃毎日新聞]. In his editorials he took a stance in favor of universal suffrage and the socialist labor movement. Like Nakano, Kazami entered politics via journalism, first running for election in 1928 (when he failed to be elected) and again more successfully in 1930 as a candidate of the Minseitō. Once in parliament, he joined the Minseitō's Adachi faction, of which Nakano was also a member. When Adachi and Nakano left the Minseitō at the end of 1931, Kazami followed them and in 1932 participated in the establishment of the Kokumin Dōmei. When Nakano left the Kokumin Dōmei at the end of 1935, however, Kazami stayed behind. While both continued to agree on many political issues of the day, the paths of Kazami (who was re-elected four times before the end of the war) and Nakano grew more distant from 1936 onward, mainly because Kazami advanced to positions of power while Nakano chose to remain on the fringe. In 1937, Kazami served as Cabinet Secretary in the first Konoe cabinet, where he tried without success to work against the expansion of the war in China. He became Minister of Justice in Konoe's second cabinet (1940). Like Nakano, Kazami belonged to the reformist camp at the time, supporting the New Structure Movement and later serving in the IRAA. Neither

Nakano nor Kazami were nominated in the 1942 'recommended' election, but whereas Nakano managed to get elected anyway, Kazami chose not even to run and withdrew entirely from politics thereafter. Having been barred from public office by the occupation authorities following the end of WW2, Kazami re-entered politics only in 1952, serving as an MP first unaffiliated but later joining the left wing of the Socialist Party (1955). During his last years, Kazami was active in the peace movement and several international friendship societies such as the Sino-Japanese Society for the Recovery of Friendly Relations [日中・日ソ国交回復国民会] and the Committee for Cooperation between Asia and Africa [アジア・アフリカ連帯委員会]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 83-87, 192-94, 339-42 as well as vol. 2, p. 251-58, 279-81, 358-61 and 444-45.)

**Kikuchi Ryōichi** [菊池良一] (1879 - ?), *lawyer and politician*. Born in Aomori prefecture (his father had been a member of parliament), Kikuchi studied Law at Tokyo Imperial University and then entered a career in journalism. First elected to the Diet in 1915 (?). He was a member of the Yamaji faction within the Kokumin Dōmei.

**Kimura Eiichi** [木村鋭市 sometimes misspelled 鋭一] (1879 - 1947), *diplomat and member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank in the 1920s*. Born in Shimane prefecture, Kimura attended Tokyo Imperial University and first worked for Sumitomo Bank before entering the Foreign Service, attending the Paris Peace (1918) and Washington (1922) Conferences. Subsequently he served as head of the Asia department and ambassador to Czechoslovakia. He resigned from the Foreign Service in 1930 and worked as a director for the Manchurian Railway. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1. P. 235.)

**Kimura Ki** [木村毅] (1894 - 1979), *novelist and literary critic, who wrote a play on the*

*last part of Nakano's life.* Born in Okamoto prefecture, Kimura studied English literature at Waseda, then worked as an editor. In 1925, he co-founded the Meiji Culture Research Association. In 1928, he studied in London and upon his return lectured at Meiji and Rikkyō Universities. He also joined the Japan Fabian Church and the Japan Farmer and Labor Party [日本労農党]. Kimura made himself a name as student and critic of Meiji literature. In 1978, he received the Kikuchi prize. In 1946, Kimura wrote a play entitled: “The last days of Nakano Seigō – a shishi” [或る志士 : 中野正剛の最後], Tokyo: Kōeinkai, 1946.

**Kimura Takeo** [木村武雄] (1902 - 1983), *politician and member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Yamagata prefecture, Kimura studied political economy at Meiji University graduating in 1926. He served on the municipal council of his native city of Komezawa-city and on the Yamagata provincial assembly before being first elected to the Diet in 1936. A member of the Neutral Club [中立倶楽部], he subsequently joined the Tōhōkai, running successfully as their candidate in the 1936 and again in the 1937 elections. Kimura acted as liaison between the Tōhōkai and Ishiwara Kanji's Tōa Renmei. Having left the Tōhōkai after the failed merger with the Social Mass Party, he was re-elected during the recommended election of 1942. After the war, Kimura continued to hold a seat in the Diet, participating in the foundation of the Japan Liberal Party (1945). Holding minor positions in the second Saitō cabinet, he became Minister of Construction in the first Tanaka cabinet. (See Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; pp. 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 572, vol. 2, p. 245 and 710.)

**Kishi Mamoru** [岸衛] (1881 - ?), *politician and member of the Yamaji faction within the Kokumin Dōmei*. Born in Urawa-city, Saitama prefecture, Kishi graduated from English



department of the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages and then worked at various renowned European Hotels. First elected to the Diet in 1928 as a Minseitō candidate, he served as secretary to the Minister of Overseas Affairs between 1929 and 1931. He left the Minseitō in 1931 with Adachi and helped in establishing the Kokumin Dōmei. In later years he occupied various government positions in the Atami-city and Shizuoka prefecture. He also worked for the English-language magazine Nippon.

**Kiyose Ichirō** [清瀬一郎] (1884 - 1967), *politician and lawyer*. Born in Hyōgo prefecture, Kiyose studied at Kyoto Imperial University. He was first elected to the Diet in 1920 and subsequently re-elected 14 times, serving as Vice-president of the Diet from 1928. In 1925, Kiyose and Nakano submitted a motion opposing the Peace Preservation Law. Kiyose was a member of the IRAA. Following the war, he was the chief defensive lawyer of Tōjō Hideki during the Tokyo trials. He served as Minister of Education in the third Hatoyama cabinet and became president of the Diet in 1960. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 391, 472, and 633.)

**Kiyozawa Kiyoshi** [清沢洌] (1890 - 1945), *foreign affairs commentator*. Born in Nagano prefecture, Kiyozawa studied at a Christian school and visited the US in 1906, later becoming a reporter for a Japanese paper. He returned to Japan in 1918, working at different newspapers including the *Asahi News*. In 1929, he established himself as an independent critic, mainly commenting on foreign affairs. Following the Manchurian incident, Kiyozawa did not (like many other intellectuals) convert or grow silent but rather became a sharp critic of the increasingly ideological foreign policies proposed in Japan. In 1937, he met Nakano in Europe and presented him with George Ward Prices's "I Know These Dictators" (New York, 1938). His wartime diary, "Diary of Darkness" [暗黒日記], describing the political, diplomatic and social developments in wartime Japan was published in 1954 and became very popular. In it he discusses how much he

disliked Nakano's views on politics.

**Koizumi Matajirō** [小泉又次郎] (1856 - 1951), *politician*. Born as the son of a steeplejack in Kanagawa Prefecture, Koizumi twice enrolled in the Military Academy (first Navy, then Army) without having his parents' consent. Both times his father brought him back home, eventually convincing him to follow the family's business while also serving as head of a squad of firefighters in Yokosuka. In order to mark that decision, he had a giant dragon tattooed over the length of his body and later was known as the "tattooed minister" [入れ墨大臣]. He entered the Kaishintō [改進黨] in 1887. In 1889, he started working as a journalist for the *Tokyo-Yokohama Newspaper* [東京横浜毎日新聞]. In 1903, he was elected to the prefectural assembly and, in 1907, to the Yokosuka city assembly, becoming that body's head in 1910. From 1908 he ran as a candidate of the Yūkōkai [猶興会] and was elected 12 times in a row until 1942. After forming the anti-Seiyūkai Yūshinkai [又新会], he belonged to the Dōshikai [同志会], the Kenseikai [憲政会] and the Minseitō, of which he became an executive officer. From early on Koizumi had been an advocate of universal suffrage. Between 1924 and 1927 he served as Vice-president of the Diet [衆院副議長]. He served as Minister of Communications in the Hamaguchi and second Wakatsuki cabinet and in this position was assisted by Nakano who served as Vice-minister of Communications under him (the two men knew each other from before, Nakano had once presented Koizumi with a dog that he had brought home from Siberia). In 1934 he became mayor of Yokosuka city. In 1939, he became councilor to the cabinet. After the dissolution of the Minseitō he joined the IRAA [翼賛政治会] and served as its advisor. In 1944, he became advisor to the cabinet and, in 1945, he was appointed to the House of Peers. After the war, he was excluded from public office by the occupation forces. Koizumi was the grandfather of later Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō.

**Kojima Kazuo** [古島 一雄] (1865 - 1952), *journalist, politician and Inukai Tsuyoshi's right-hand man*. Born in the Toyo-oka domain [豊岡藩] (present-day Toyo-oka city in Hyōgo prefecture) into a samurai family, Kojima went to Tokyo at age 14 to study at the Kyōritsu Gakkō, the predecessor of today's Kaisei Middle and High School [開成中学校・高等学校] under Hamao Arata [浜尾新, 1849 -1925] and Sugiura Shigetake [杉浦重剛, 1855-1924]. From its inception in 1888 he worked at Miyake Setsurei's magazine *The Japanese* [日本人]. In 1898 he became editor-in-chief of the *Kyūshū Nippō* and in 1908 switched to the *Yorazu Chōhō* [萬朝報]. Pushed by Inukai Tsuyoshi and Tōyama Mitsuru, he entered the political world in 1911 and was elected to the Diet a total of six times, belonging first to the Kokumintō, then to the Kakushin Club and lastly to the Seiyūkai. Although affiliated with different parties, he was thought closely associated with Inukai Tsuyoshi. When Inukai was made Minister of Communications in 1924, he served as Vice-minister under him. After failing to be re-elected in 1928, he was nominated to the upper house in 1932 where he served until 1947. After WW2, Kojima was offered a seat in the Hidehara cabinet but declined for reasons of health, instead recommending Yoshida Shigeru. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 129-31, 152-55, 373-74, 396-402, 622 and 639-40.)

**Komai Tokuzō** [駒井徳三] (1885 - 1961), *central figure in the establishment of Manchūkuo*. Born in Shiga prefecture, Komai graduated from the faculty of agriculture of Tōhoku University in 1911. After having been in charge of agricultural development at the Manchurian Railway, he joined the Foreign Ministry overseeing investments in China. Shortly after the Manchurian Incident of 1931, he became advisor to the Guandong Army and soon thereafter was made general manager of the newly established Guandong Army administrative department. After the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo, due to his knowledge,

Komai participated in the building of the young state and in the formation of its policies, but soon got into conflict with the military officers of the Guangdong Army, which led to his resignation. From 1935, he dedicated himself to the education of youth from Japan and China. After the war Komai was purged from public office. According to Komai, he and Nakano knew each other from around the time of the Tanaka cabinet (late 1920s), when both lived within walking distance in Harajuku. Even though Komai at the time was not interested in politics, Nakano often confided in him concerning political matters, in particular in matters relating to fund-raising. When after the Manchurian Incident Japanese political circles debated whether or not to recognize the state of Manchūkuo, Nakano, advocating recognition, received Yen 100,000 from Komai to support his campaign financially. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 666-69, and vol. 2, p. 350 and Komai Tokuzō [駒井徳三]; “A look behind the scenes of political fund raising” [政治資金の楽屋裏], part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in “Japan and the Japanese” [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 18-21.)

**Komura Kin'ichi** [小村欣一] (1883 - 1930), *diplomat and member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank in the 1920s*. Son of diplomat Komura Juntarō, Kin'ichi graduated from Tokyo Imperial University's faculty of law in 1907 and in the same year entered the Foreign Service, being first posted to China and then in London. From 1911 until his death he was a member of the House of Peers. Komura served as Vice-minister of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs [拓務省] in the Hamaguchi cabinet. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 219, 235, and 746.)

**Kondō Hidezō** [近藤日出造] (1908 - 1979), *cartoonist*. Born in Nagano prefecture, Kondō spent his youth following middle school helping out at his parents' store. At the age of 18 he went to Tokyo where, after a series of different jobs, he became an apprentice of Okamoto Ippei [岡本一平]. Before the WW2 he worked for the *Kyūshū Nippō*, the organ of the Genyōsha,

and developed a new non-political and nonsensical style of manga. In 1940, he co-founded the New Japan Manga Association [新日本漫画協会] and became editor-in-chief of their organ, Manga [漫画], which became known for its caricatures of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Chiang Kai-shek. After the war, he worked for the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Kondō Hidezō interviewed Nakano in 1942, making fun of Nakano's fascist demeanor.

**Koyama Shōju** [小山松寿] (1876 - 1959), *politician, journalist and newspaper manager*.

Born in Aichi prefecture, Koyama followed a path similar to that of Nakano, first enrolling at the Tokyo Vocational School [東京専門学校], the precursor of Waseda University, and then embarking on a career in journalism. After working for the *Osaka Asahi*, Koyama became head of the *Asahi's* Nagoya office where in 1906 he bought the *Chūkyō Shimbun* [中京新聞] and renamed it *Nagoya Shimbun* [名古屋新聞]. Nagoya was also the place where he first entered politics, being elected to the city assembly in 1907. In 1915 he was elected to the lower house and subsequently re-elected 10 times. He entered the Kenseikai and from there the Minseitō, where he served as chief secretary. From May 1930, he served as vice-speaker of the lower house, and between July 1937 and December 1941 as speaker of the same house. After the war he participated in the foundation of the Japan Progressive Party [日本進歩党] but a deeper involvement in politics was forestalled when he was purged from public office. Koyama was the speaker of the Lower House when there was a motion calling for Nakano's expulsion in early 1939. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 380-87.)

**Kuhara Fusanosuke** [久原房之助] (1869 - 1965), *businessman and politician*. Born in Yamaguchi prefecture, Kuhara studied at Keiō University, graduating in 1889. After working in the mining industry for some years, Kuhara started his own mining company, which prospered and, during WW1, expanded into fields as different as shipping, insurance, steel making,

ship-building, and petroleum. The post-war recession, however, greatly hurt his enterprises. While running his various companies, Kuhara entered politics around 1928, joining the Seiyukai and serving as Minister of Communications in the Tanaka cabinet. After the failure of the negotiations over the establishment of a coalition cabinet, Kuhara led his faction into an ever-closer relationship with the Army and right-wing circles, proposing a one-state-one-party government model. He supported financially some of the rebels of the February 26 Incident, which brought him into trouble. After the split of the Seiyūkai in 1939, Kuhara led the Real Seiyūkai [政友会正当派]. He served as cabinet councilor in the Yonai and second Konoe cabinets. Purged from public office after WW2, he never reentered politics, restricting his activities to fostering good relations between China and Japan. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 394-97, 622-32, and vol. 2, p. 14, 57, 444-45.)

**Kurino Shin'ichirō** [栗野慎一郎] (1851 - 1937), *Fukuoka-born diplomat*. Kurino was the son of a Fukuoka samurai (responsible for teaching the use of the pike) and studied at the domain's Shūyūkan Middle School. On account of his academic promise, he was given a grant by the domain's authorities to study at Harvard University. Upon his return, he entered the Foreign Service and represented Japan in the negotiations over the revision of the commercial treaty with the US in 1894, and later as ambassador to Italy, France and Russia.

**Kuroda Reiji** [黒田礼二] (1890 - 1943), *journalist, German expert and translator of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" who accompanied Nakano on his trip to Europe in 1937-8*. Born in Kōchi prefecture, Kuroda was originally called Okano Morimichi [岡上守道] but changed his name to Kuroda Reiji in honor of Kropotkin and Lenin. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University. In 1923, he was sent to Berlin as a correspondent of the *Asahi News*. Kuroda translated various German books into Japanese. Around 1931 he became an ardent supporter of the Nazi movement,

translating Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in 1940. He published his own view of developments in Germany under the title "Progress in Germany – a reader" [躍進独逸 読本]. He was killed in 1943 when the ship carrying him to Borneo was sunk. (See Miyake Masaki, "Hitler and Japan" [ヒットラーと日本], in History and People [歴史と人物], vol. 3, no.9 pp. 166-67 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 282.)

**Kurushima Tsuneki** [来島恒喜] (1859 - 1889), *member of the Genyōsha and the person who maimed Ōkuma Shigenobu through a bomb*. Second son of a Samurai from Fukuoka-han, Kurushima studied at Takabe Osamu's Ginseng-Field School and thus came into contact with the political radicals following Tōyama Mitsuru. Following the Satsuma rebellion, Kurushima participated in the People's Rights Movement, then entered the Genyōsha. In 1887, he succeeded Hakoda Rokusuke as manager of the Genyōsha. Opposing the revision of the unequal treaties, Kurushima threw a bomb at Ōkuma Shigenobu in 1889, then killed himself on the spot. Ōkuma lost a leg and the negotiations were interrupted. The bombing was in all likelihood carried out with the consent, if not the support, of the Genyōsha. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 47, 220, and 426.)

**Kurusu Saburō** [来栖三郎] (1886 - 1954), *diplomat who had been dispatched to Washington to support Ambassador Nomura's negotiations efforts with the US in late 1941*. Born in Yokohama, Kurusu was educated at the Tokyo Higher Commercial School (today Hitotsubashi University), then joined the Foreign Service. After serving at the embassy in Belgium, Kurusu served as ambassador to Germany and in that position opposed the conclusion of the Triple Alliance. His America-friendly views were the main reason Foreign Minister Tōgō chose him to support the last attempt at a negotiated peace with the US in late 1941. They were also the main reason Nakano criticized him repeatedly during the period leading up to Pearl Harbor. (See

Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 456 and 513.)

**Kuzū Yoshihisa** [葛生能久] (1874 - 1958), *nationalist and politician*. Born in Chiba prefecture. Together with his elder brother Kuzū Tōsuke [葛生東介] and Uchida Ryōhei, he participated in the foundation of the Kokuryūkai. In 1911, he traveled to China to support the revolutionary forces there. In 1931, he participated in the formation of the Greater Japan Production Party [大日本生産党] After the death of Uchida Ryōhei in 1937, he took over the presidency of the Kokuryūkai. Kuzū also served on the IRAA where, together with Nakano and others, he formed the party's right wing. (See Nakano Seigō, vol. 1, p. 533.)

**Lin Chang-min** [林長民] (1876 - 1925), *politician of late imperial and early republican China*. Born into the family of a bureaucrat, Lin showed promise in linguistics, mastering English and Japanese before working as a translator. He came to Japan in 1906 and earned a degree in political economy at Waseda University, where he befriended Nakano and Kazami Akira and socialized with Chinese and Japanese pan-Asianists. After graduating in 1909, he returned to China, working as a professor in Fujian province. In the aftermath of the Chinese revolution of 1911, he served as representative of Fujian at the new nationalist government in Nanking. After the inauguration of Republican China, he served in various positions in the Chinese government, as well as in the Ministry of the Interior, the Secretariat of the Parliament, and the Ministry of Justice. After having spent a couple of years in Europe following WW1, he returned to China and served on the constitutional drafting committee. Lin died fighting against the northern warlord Chang Tsuo-lin in 1925. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 79-83, 110-11, 403-06, 580, 586 and 644.)



**Maeda Tomosuke** [前田友助] (1887 - 1975), *medical doctor who amputated Nakano's leg in 1926*. Born in Aichi prefecture, Maeda graduated from Tokyo Imperial University and later became a professor at Keiō University. In 1927, he opened the Maeda Surgical Clinic in Akasaka, Tokyo and in 1966 he became honorary president of the Association of Japanese Surgeons. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 17-18 and 424.)

**Makino Ryōzō** [牧野良三] (1885 - 1961), *lawyer and politician*. Born in Gifu prefecture, Makino graduated from Tokyo Imperial University before becoming a lawyer. Elected to the Diet in 1920, he was re-elected 10 times. During the 1926 Diet session, following Nakano's attack against Tanaka Gi'ichi, Makino accused Nakano of accepting bribes from representatives of the Soviet Union, but later admitted the accusation was wrong. In 1938, he opposed the National Mobilization Law as unconstitutional. He served as Minister of Justice in the post-war Hatoyama cabinet. (Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 428 and 440.)

**Masumoto Uhei** [榑本卯平] (1873 - 1931), *shipbuilding engineer*. Born in Miyazaki prefecture, Masumoto graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, then studied shipbuilding in the US and England for ten years. Upon his return, he worked for Mitsubishi Shipbuilding, serving as head of the Toba Shipyard. His selection by the government to represent Japan at the International Labor Conference in 1919 was strongly opposed by labor groups. Masumoto was a member of the Yūshin-sha founded by Nakano in 1922. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 339-41.)

**Matsumae Shigeyoshi** [松前重義] (1901 - ??), *bureaucrat and politician*. Born in Kumamoto prefecture, Matsumae graduated from the electrical engineering department of Tōhoku University in 1925, then entered the Ministry of Communications. In 1936, he received

his doctoral degree in engineering in Germany. He later developed an interest in education and, following the Nazi policy of emphasizing technical instruction, he founded a school for aeronautical engineering, which later became Tōkai University. While still working in the Communications Ministry, he briefly joined the IRAA but then withdrew in order to return to the ministry, heading its civil engineering department. It was in this capacity that he came to cooperate with Nakano in the Senior Statesmen scheme. For openly opposing Tōjō, Matsumae was drafted and sent off to the front in the Pacific in 1944. After the war he served as the first director of the Tōkai University. Purged from public office until 1952, he ran successfully for election in 1952 and was subsequently re-elected five times as a member of Socialist Party. In later years he made himself a name as an advocate of social democracy in Japan, and was active in improving relations between Japan and the Soviet Union and other Eastern European communist countries. Matsumae also served in leading positions for the International Jūdō League and the Japan Foreign Culture Association. He authored several books on engineering as well as an account of his experiences as a soldier. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 716, 736, 750, and 785.)

**Matsumoto Kenjirō** [松本健次郎] (1870 - 1963), *businessman*. Born in Fukuoka as the second son of Genyōsha member and coal baron Yasukawa Kei'ichirō, he founded Yasukawa–Matsumoto Shōten in 1893, a company that engaged in the production and sale of coal. In 1919, he became president of the Meiji Mining company and later served in leading positions of various coal industry associations and as member of the upper house. Throughout his career, Matsumoto supported Nakano financially. Having studied in the US, Matsumoto spoke English well enough to serve as an interpreter to foreign observers during the Russo-Japanese War and in that capacity made the acquaintance of General MacArthur's father. In the summer of 1943, Matsumoto delivered a lecture to the Emperor concerning economic controls in the coal industry, leading

Nakano to hope that he would use the opportunity to inform the Emperor of the disastrous situation of the Japanese wartime economy. Much to Nakano's disappointment, the lecture was also attended by Minister of the Interior, Kido, who ensured that Matsumoto toned the critical content of his lecture down. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 191 and vol. 2, p. 498 and 746.)

**Matsunaga Yasuzaemon** [松永安左衛門] (1875 - 1971), *businessman, political rival and later financial backer of Nakano*. Matsunaga was born in Nagasaki prefecture and educated at Keiō University. He left before graduating and worked for the Bank of Japan and in the coal industry before entering the electricity business. He ran for election in Fukuoka in 1920 but lost against Nakano. Afterward, he founded the electricity company Tōhō Electric [東邦電力] (present-day Chūbu Electric [中部電力]) and in 1928 became that company's president. During the 1930s, he was one of Nakano's financial backers. He withdrew from business in 1941 but returned after the war as president of the committee for the restructuring of the Japanese electric utility sector. Instrumental in dividing the Japanese electricity market into nine different areas, he came to be known as the "Demon of Electricity" [電気の鬼]. He remained actively involved in the Japanese power generation industry well into his eighties. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 221-24, 230, 283-86, 556 and vol. 2, p. 102, 202, 267, and 498.)

**Matsutani Yojirō** [松谷与二郎] (1880 - 1937), *social activist and politician*. Born in Ishikawa prefecture, Matsutani graduated from Meiji University and became a lawyer in 1914. In 1921, he participated in the foundation of the Free Law Society [自由法曹団], thereafter often acting as the legal representative of workers or farmers in court. In 1927, he participated in the foundation of the Japanese Workers' and Farmers' Party [日本労農党] becoming one of the central members of the proletarian faction. In 1930, he was elected to the Diet as a representative of Tokyo. Immediately after the Manchurian Incident, Matsutani traveled to north-eastern China

and upon his return published a manifesto titled “The Matsutani Opinion Paper” [松谷意見書] in which he strongly supported aggressive war. The manifesto caused a great shock among the social activists of the All Japan Workers’ and Farmers’ Party [全国労農党]. In 1932, he entered the National League [国民同盟] under the leadership of Adachi and in 1934 became the president of the Japanese Labor Party [勤労日本党].

**Matsuyama Chūjirō** [松山忠二郎] (1870 - 1942), *journalist and newspaper manager*. Born in Shiga prefecture, Matsuyama graduated from the precursor of Waseda University [東京専門学校]. In 1894, he entered the Tokyo Keizai Magazine. Three years later, he switched to the *Osaka Asahi News* and from there moved to the *Tokyo Asahi*, which he left in 1918. In 1920, he became president of the *Yomiuri News*. In 1931, he became president of the Manchurian Daily [満州日報]. After the resignation of Ikebe Sanzan, he was Nakano’s boss until the latter’s withdrawal from the paper in 1916. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 142 and 153-54.)

**Matsuzaka Hiromasa** [松阪広政] (1884 - 1960), *lawyer and public prosecutor in charge of Nakano’s arrest in 1943*. Born in Kyoto, Matsuzaka graduated from Tokyo Imperial University and then entered the Ministry of Justice, becoming Public Prosecutor in 1925 and chief Public Prosecutor in 1941. He served as Minister of Justice in the Koiso and Suzuki cabinets. After the war, Matsuzaka was arrested as wartime criminal but eventually released. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 785-92, and 797.)

**Miki Bukichi** [三木武吉] (1884 - 1956), *politician who cooperated with Nakano in the overthrow of Tōjō in 1942-3*. Born in Kagawa Prefecture, Miki went to Tokyo Vocational School (present-day Waseda University). After graduation, he first worked in a legal office and, in 1917,

he was elected MP to the Diet. He first met Nakano after the latter's return from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. In 1924, he became chief secretary of the Kenseikai (later Minseitō). Initially friends within the Kenseikai, Nakano and Miki grew apart when they joined different factions within the same party. In 1928, Miki was arrested on suspicion of having accepted bribes and subsequently sentenced to three months in prison. The affair left a stain on his political career that would haunt him into the post-war period. After his release from prison, he temporarily distanced himself from politics and worked for the *Hōchi Shimbun* [報知新聞], becoming its president in 1939. In 1942, he ran again for election and though he was not recommended by the government, he was successfully elected in the first district of Kagawa. Over the following year, he cooperated closely with Nakano's attempts to overthrow Tōjō. In the postwar period, Miki participated in the founding of the Japanese Liberal Party but then was barred from public office by the occupation authorities. Miki returned to the political arena with the 1952 general election, supporting his erstwhile political enemy, Hatoyama Ichirō, against the Yoshida Shigeru government. (For Miki's relationship with Nakano, see Miki Bukichi [三木武吉], "Fight to the death against the Tōjō cabinet" [東条内閣との死闘]; part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in "Japan and the Japanese" [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 10 – 16 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 31-2, and vol. 2, p. 709-10 and 726-32.)

**Mitamura Takeo** [三田村武夫] (1899 - 1964), *politician*. Born in Gifu Prefecture, Mitamura graduated from the Police Academy in 1927. He then worked at the police bureau of the Ministry of the Interior and later at the general affairs bureau of the Department of Overseas Affairs [拓務省]. He left the Department of Overseas Affairs in opposition to the Kwantung Army's seizure of police powers. He joined the Tōhōkai and worked there as Head of Organization [組織部長] and Head of Party Affairs [党務部長] before becoming Nakano's right-hand man. After failing to be elected in 1936, he ran as a candidate of the Tōhōkai in 1937

and was successfully elected as a representative of Gifu. Although not recommended by the government in the 1942 election, he nevertheless managed to be elected as a candidate for the Tōhōkai. He actively participated in Nakano's scheme against Tōjō and later was arrested and imprisoned for violation of the publishing law. After the war, he was banned from public office, but in 1952 he became active again by founding the Independent Freedom League [独立自由連盟]. In 1953 he joined the Hatoyama faction of the Liberal Party [自由党]. When Hatoyama returned to the Jiyūtō, Mitamura remained in Miki Bukichi's Japan Liberal Party [日本自由党], eventually becoming the head of organization of the Japan Democratic Party [日本民主党]. In 1955 he was elected to the Diet, where he joined the Kawano faction of the LPD [自民党] and worked as their head of organization [組織総局長]. Mitamura remained one of the most outspoken and uncritical fans of Nakano, often casting himself in the role of the manager of Nakano's legacy, attacking and sometimes even threatening those who criticized Nakano. His writing is highly nostalgic for the Tōhōkai. On occasion he wrote things such as: "I wait for the flag of the Tōhōkai to fly again." (See Mitamura Takeo [三田村武夫]; "The spirit of eternal camaraderie"[同志永久の魂]; part of a special feature "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う], in "Japan and the Japanese" [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 21-24 . This text also contains Mitamura defending Nakano against the book by Koizumi. See also Nakano Yasuo, vol., 2, 726-28, 738-40, and 749-50, 781, 787, and 806.)

**Mitsukawa Kametarō** [満川亀太郎] (1888 - 1936), *nationalist activist*. Born in Osaka, Mitsukawa enrolled at Waseda University but withdrew before graduating and initially worked as a journalist for a military magazine called "Greater Japan"[大日本]. Together with Ōkawa Shūmei, he founded the Rōsōkai [老壮会] in 1918 and, one year later, with Ōkawa Shūmei and Kita Ikki, the Yūzonsha in Shanghai. He also was a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank and

his Yūshin-sha in 1922. In 1932, he became a permanent secretary of the New Japan National League [新日本国民同盟]. Later he became a university professor, devoting himself to the education of his students. Mitsukawa was the person who established the contact between Nakano and Kita Ikki, both of whom belonged briefly to the Rōsōkai.

**Miura Torao** [三浦虎雄] (1883 - ?), *politician and member of the Minseitō, Kokumin Dōmei and Tōhōkai*. Born in Miyazaki prefecture, Miura studied politics at Kyōto University, graduating in 1908. He then served as an accountant in the military before entering politics in the 1920s. As a member of the Kokumin Dōmei and Tōhōkai, he was elected to the Diet in 1932, 1936 and 1937. (See Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 115, 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 245-47.)

**Miwa Jusō** [三輪寿壮] (1894 - 1956), *lawyer and politician*. Born in Fukuoka prefecture, Miwa graduated from the same Shūyūkan as Nakano. He also shared Nakano’s interest in *jūdō*. Unlike Nakano, however, Miwa entered the faculty of law of Tokyo University. During his studies he entered the Shinjin-kai [新人会] in 1919. Miwa first met Nakano in 1922, when Miwa organized a rally on the topic of recognizing Soviet Russia and invited Nakano to hold a speech. After graduation, Miwa worked briefly as an assistant in a law firm before representing workers and tenant farmers from 1921 onward. He served as the secretary of Workers’ and Farmers’ Party [労働農民党] in 1926; when that party broke up, he continued to serve as secretary in the Japan Workers’ and Farmers’ Party [日本労民党]. Through the various breakups and mergers of the left-wing parties, Miwa always maintained a mainstream position within the left wing. In 1932, he joined the Social Mass Party, acting as its accountant and later secretary. In 1937, he was one of the members of the Social Mass Party to be elected to the Diet. Miwa was also involved in the merger talks between the Social Mass Party and the Tōhōkai in 1939. After the war, Miwa was

prosecuted for his cooperation in the wartime system and purged from public office, which forced him to concentrate on practicing law (defending, among others, Kishi Nobusuke). After he was allowed to hold public office again, he joined the Japan Socialist Party [日本社会党] and when this broke apart, he followed its right wing, later founding the Social Democratic League [民主社会主義連盟]. Starting in 1952, Miwa was elected three times to the Diet. (See Miwa Jusō [三輪寿壮], “Questions related to the merger of the Tōhōkai with the Social Mass Party” [東方会と社大党の合同問題]; part of a special feature “Remembering Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛を憶う], in *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人], January 1956, p. 28 - 30 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 370-78, and 386.)

**Miyagawa Ikkan** [宮川一貫] (1884 - 1944), *politician, classmate and rival of Nakano in Fukuoka*. Born into the family of Miyagawa Tai'ichirō [宮川太一郎] (a former student of Takaba Osamu's Ginseng Field School who was known for his strength at martial arts), Miyagawa repeatedly won against Nakano at *jūdō*. He lost, however, against Nakano in the 1920 election. Miyagawa ran again for office in 1928, this time successfully. He was re-elected twice (1930 and 1932) but failed to get reelected in 1936 and thereafter retired from politics. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 221-24, 375-81, 531, and 646.)

**Miyagawa Ta'ichirō** [宮川太一郎] (1847 - 1909), *political activist and co-founder of the Genyōsha*. Born into a samurai family in the service of the Kuroda-han, Miyagawa studied at the domain's Bunpu-kan [文武館] before entering Takaba Osamu's Ginseng-Field School. Tall, stout and an accomplished practitioner of various martial arts, Miyagawa was a formidable foe in combat. He participated in the rebellions of Saga and Hagi and was subsequently imprisoned. After his release, he returned to Fukuoka and devoted himself to business, supporting the



Genyōsha financially but otherwise staying out of politics. (See See Kokuryūkai [黒竜会] eds., Records from the South-West [西南記伝], (Tokyo: Hara Shobō [原書房], 1969) and History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992) and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 47.)

**Miyake Kaho** [三宅花圃] (1968 - 1943), *writer, poet and Nakano's mother-in-law*. Born Tanabe Ryūko [田辺竜子], Kaho studied Japanese poetry under Nakajima Kako [中島歌子]. She established her fame as a writer through novels such as “The Nightingale in the Grove” [藪の鶯]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 129, 188, 199, 214, 310, 452, 574, 712, 810 and 817 as well as vol. 2, p. 23, and 73.)

**Miyake Setsurei** [三宅雪嶺] (1860 - 1945), *journalist, critic, philosopher, historian, and Nakano's father-in-law*. Born in Kanazawa-city of Kaga-han (present-day Ishikawa prefecture) as a son of a Confucian doctor serving Kaga-domain, Miyake graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Tokyo University in 1883 and worked for the Ministry of Education until 1887. He later married the novelist and poet Tanabe Kaho. Together with Shiga Shigetaka [志賀重昂], Sugiura Shigetake [杉浦重剛] and Inoue Enryō [井上円了], he founded a nationalist think tank called Seikyōsha (政教社, lit. Society for Political Education) in 1888 and henceforth published the society's organ, *The Japanese* [日本人]. Opposing the government's drive toward Westernization, the society advocated a pure nationalism [国粋主義] and sought to educate the Japanese public on, and thus preserve the uniqueness of, Japanese culture and identity. In 1907, the society's organ took over the failing newspaper *Japan* [日本] and renamed it *Japan and the Japanese* [日本及び日本人]. It was then that Miyake became its chief editor and it must have been around that time that Nakano, still a student, started writing for the

magazine. In 1923, Miyake left the Seikyō-sha and founded a new magazine, *My View or Our View*, [我観] together with Nakano. Although Miyake never occupied a position of power in the government (he was once asked to serve as Minister of Education in the Hayashi cabinet but declined, a decision that earned him the respect of many people across the political spectrum), he commented frequently on political affairs. Critical of the wholesale import of Western culture into Japan, Miyake argued for Japan's uniqueness and its unique mission in Asia and the world. In addition to many articles published in his and other magazines, Miyake's main monographs include “Tetsugakukenteki” (1889) and “The Universe” [宇宙] (1909) and an autobiography [自伝]. He also continued to write a detailed chronicle of modern history called “Dō jidai shi” [同時代史] until the last year of his life. For his contribution to the understanding of Japanese culture, Miyake received the Order of Culture in 1943, two years before his death. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 125-129, 221-22, 304-10, 364-68, 571-75, and vol., 2, 82-83, 271-73, 371-76 and 715.)

**Miyazaki Ryūsuke** [宮崎竜介] (1892 - 1971), *social activist, member of the Tōhōkai and first-born son of Miyazaki Tōten*. Born in Kumamoto prefecture, Miyazaki studied at Tokyo Imperial University and there was one of the founding members of the Shinjinkai [新人会]. While still a student, Miyazaki became notoriously involved in an extra-marital love affair. After graduating he worked as a lawyer and later entered politics, first as a member of the Social Mass Party and, from 1939, as a member of the Tōhōkai. He ran as a candidate for the Tōhōkai in 1942 but failed to be elected. In the post-war period, he became active in the movement to improve Sino-Japanese relations. (See Nagai, Kazuo; “The Development of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101, 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 257.)

**Miyazaki Yoshimasa** [宮崎吉政] (1915 - ?), *politician and political commentator*. Born in Sapporo, Hokkaidō, Miyazaki studied political economy at Waseda University and joined the Tōhōkai, where he was put in charge of the party's Youth organization. He later worked as journalist of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, eventually rising to the position of editor. As a political commentator he published various books, including one on Satō Eisaku. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 426 and 519 as well as Miyazaki Yoshimasa [宮崎吉政], "When a Politician makes a Decision: Nakano Seigō's Suicide" [政治家が決断するとき : 中野正剛の自刃], in *Monthly New Liberty* [月刊新自由グラフ], vol. 7, February, 1987, p. 60 – 70.)

**Mori Shōzō** [森正蔵] (1900 - 1953), *journalist*. Mori was born in Saga Prefecture and graduated from the Russian language department of Tokyo Gaigodai [東京外国語大学] in 1924. In 1926, he entered the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, working in Kyoto, Harbin and Moscow. He became a Russian expert after his return in 1940. Thereafter he occupied a number of high-ranking positions at the newspaper. Mori wrote a bestselling book entitled "20 Years in the Whirlwind" [旋風の二十年] in which he gives an explanation for Tōjō's clampdown on the Tōhōkai (See Ibid. p. 243-35).

**Mune Moritoshi** [宗盛年] (1824 - 1904), *Nakano's teacher at the Shūyūkan Middle School in Fukuoka*. Born as the second son of Nakamura Sa-ichi [中村佐市], a samurai of the Fukuoka-han, Moritoshi was adopted into the Mune family. While attending the domain's school, Shūyūkan, he developed a strong interest in the Chinese classics. After working as a lecturer and teacher at the Shūyūkan for many years, he taught at private academies and accepted students in his home. Nakano received instructions in the Chinese classics from Mune as a child. Mune is said to have economized on food and clothing in order to save money for books, eventually

accumulating a collection of several thousand volumes, which today are in the possession of the library of Kyūshū University.

**Nagai Ryūtarō** [永井柳太郎] (1881 - 1944), *politician*. Born in Ishikawa prefecture, Nagai graduated from Waseda and then embarked on a career as a journalist, working as the editor-in-chief of the magazine *New Japan* [新日本]. In 1920, he was first elected to the Diet in 1920 as a candidate for the Kenseikai. In the Diet Nagai advocated universal suffrage and soon became known as a skilled orator (he was often compared to Nakano). Both Nakano and Nagai belonged to the Adachi faction within the Minseitō, but when Adachi and Nakano left at the end of 1931 to form the Kokumin Dōmei, Nagai stayed behind and subsequently held a ministerial portfolio in the Saitō cabinet. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, 214-19, and vol. 2, p. 444-45 and 614.)

**Nagao Tamotsu** [長尾有] (1899 - 1974), *farmers' movement activist*. Born in Hyōgo prefecture, Nagao graduated from the Osaka School of Dentistry in 1918. Using his private money, in 1921 he founded two tenant unions that joined the Japan Farmers' Union [日農] in 1922. In 1924, he joined the Japan Communist Party. In 1927, he became head of organization at the Japan Farmers' Union and, in that capacity, traveled throughout Japan. During the March 15, 1928 Incident, Nagao was arrested and imprisoned until May 1933. Hoping to avoid further state repression Nagao led his farmers' union to join Nakano's Tōhōkai in 1938. After the war, Nagao re-entered the Communist Party. (See Nagai, Kazuo; "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101 and Nakano Yasuo, vol., 2, p. 425.)

**Nagasaki Eizō** [長崎英造] (1881 - 1953), *businessman married to the second daughter of Katsura Tarō*. Born in Hiroshima city, Nagasaki attended Tokyo Imperial University. After

graduating, he entered the Ministry of Finance. In 1913, he entered Suzuki Trading Company in Kobe, acting as the right-hand man of Kaneko Naokichi. Two years after his resignation from Suzuki Trading Company in 1925, the company almost failed in the 1927 Shōwa financial crisis. From 1942, he was the president of Showa Sekiyu Corp. a position he held until after the war. He was a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank in the 1920s.

**Nagata Masayoshi** [永田正義] (1911 - ), *journalist, Tōhōkai member and Nakano's secretary*. Born in Kumamoto prefecture, Nagata came to Tokyo to study at Waseda. During that time he entered Nakano's student dorm. After graduating, he first worked for the *Asahi News* but during the heyday of the Tōhōkai in 1940 he left the paper and joined the party, working as Nakano's secretary. He became a leader of the Tōhōkai Youth Organization, attempting to model it on the Hitler Jugend. Following the failed attempt to overthrow the Tōjō cabinet, he and Nakano were imprisoned together. After the war, Nagata served as president of the Vietnam-Japan Association and as mayor of his hometown in Kumamoto prefecture. (See Nagata Masayoshi [永田正義], "Remembering my beloved teacher" [恩師を憶う], in "Nakano Seigō is alive" [中野正剛は生きている], edited by Seigō-kai [正剛会], Tokyo, Akane-shobō [あかね書房], 1954 as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 663-64, and vol. 2, p. 425, 473, 504-05, and 784.)

**Naitō Kōnan** [内藤湖南] (1866 - 1934), *journalist and scholar of East Asian history*. Born into a samurai family in Akita prefecture, Naitō was originally called Torajirō [虎次郎]. He moved to Tokyo in 1887 and there wrote for various magazines and newspapers. In 1907, he was invited to Kyoto Imperial University, where he lectured on East Asian History and advanced to professor in 1909. He retired in 1926 and spent his last years reading. Naitō contributed to *Tōhōjiron* when it was run by Nakano. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol.1, p. 215, 235.)

**Nakamura Matashichirō** [中村又七郎] (1884 - ?), *member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Niigata prefecture into a farming family, Nakamura studied political economy at Waseda University, graduating in 1907 (two years before Nakano). Entering local politics, he served as mayor of his native city in 1920 and later as a member of the provincial assembly before being elected to the Diet in 1942 as a Tōhōkai candidate. (See Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 425 and 729.)

**Nakamura Ryōzō** [中村良三] (1878 - 1945), *navy officer*. Born in Aomori prefecture, Nakamura graduated from the Navy War College. He served as military *attaché* in England, and as head of the Navy War College. He also maintained a close relationship with Prime Minister Yonai and was close to Nakano during the Tōhōkai years. It was through Nakamura that Nakano learned about Japan’s disastrous military situation in 1942-3. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 271, 371, 534, 586, and 715.)

**Nakano Hideto** [中野秀人] (1898 - 1966), *poet, painter, and Nakano’s youngest brother*. Much more introverted than his elder brother Seigō, Hideto first followed Nakano’s footsteps and enrolled at Waseda University (studying political economy) but he withdrew before graduating. After a stint at the *Kokumin Shimbun*, he also worked for the *Asahi*, covering drama and literature. At the same time, he also started writing his own works, mostly poetry, published in the magazine *DamDam* [ダムダム]. His “The Literature of the Fourth Class,” [第四階級の文学] published in *The World of Writing* [文章世界] in 1920, attracted much attention and was considered one of the pioneering works of proletarian literary criticism. Hideto went to Europe in 1927, spending time in London and Paris. He returned four years later married. His wife, a Spanish woman, was famed for her beauty but the marriage did not last long. In 1940, he founded his own literary magazine -

*Culture Organization* [文化組織] - with Nakano's financial support. After the war, he continued his avant-garde work in the arts, participating in the modern poetry movement [現代詩運動] and branching out into painting. His surviving works include novels, collections of poetry, tracts on literary criticism, and paintings. (See Washida Koyata [鷺田小彌太], "67 Intellectuals of the Shōwa Period" [昭和の思想家 67 人] (Tokyo, 2007), p. 305 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 19, 45, 49, 76, 188, 191, 200, 660-63, 810 and vol. 2, p. 21, 26, 807-08.)

**Nakano Tasaburō** [中野太三郎] (1879 - 1941), *Nakano's cousin and a bureaucrat*. Tasaburō was a member of the Genyōsha's martial arts school, Meidō-kan [明道館]. After graduating from the faculty of law of Tokyo Imperial University, he served as secretary to Itō Hirobumi in Korea before becoming provincial governor of Pyongan province in northern Korea. Later he also served as director in the Eastern Development Company [東洋拓殖会社].

**Nakayama Yū** [中山優] (? - ?), *Nakano's follower*. Nakayama was a journalist for the *Asahi News* in China in 1919 when Nakano returned from the Paris Peace Conference. They first met in Shanghai. Nakayama stayed in China until 1924, when he returned to Japan to live in Ikebukuro. He ran into Nakano there one day by chance. They talked about China, with both favoring Chinese unification and non-interference from Japan in Chinese affairs. (Nakayama later recalled these events in Nakayama Yū [中山優]; "Remembering Nakano Seigō" [中野正剛を憶う]; in "Kyōtsū no hiroba" [共通の広場]; September 1952, pp. 45-50 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 115-16, 352-53, 490, and 734.)

**Narahara Itaru** [奈良原至] (1857 - 1917), *political activist and co-founder of the Gentyōsha*. Born into the family of Miyagawa Tetsu [宮川轍], Itaru was subsequently adopted

into the Narahara family. Having studied at the domain's school, Bunpu-kan [文武館], he entered Takaba Osamu's Ginseng-Field School sometime after 1870. Like many of his fellow students, he participated in the Hagi revolt of 1876 and was subsequently imprisoned. Upon hearing the news of Okubo Toshimichi's assassination, he and Tōyama visited Itagaki Taisuke, who convinced them both that open rebellion was no longer an option. Subsequently, Narahara became active in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. (See Kokuryūkai [黒竜会] eds., Records from the South-West [西南記伝], Tokyo: Hara Shobō [原書房], 1969 and History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992.)

**Ninagawa Arata** [蜷川新] (1873 - 1959), *legal scholar*. Born in Shizuoka prefecture, Ninagawa studied law at Tokyo Imperial University, and served as a legal advisor to the army during the Russo-Japanese War and later as an advisor to the Korean court. After studying in Paris, Ninagawa taught international law at Dōshisha and Komazawa universities. He was barred from public office after the war on account of his nationalistic pronouncements. Occasionally he published articles in Nakano's magazine *Gakan*.

**Nishimura Tenshū** [西村天囚] (1865 - 1924), *journalist, critic and literary man of the Meiji and Taishō periods*. Born in Kagoshima prefecture, he studied at Tokyo Imperial University but withdrew without graduating. In 1890 (Meiji 23), he began working for the *Osaka Asahi News*, for which he wrote essays, reports and criticisms until his retirement in 1919. He became famous for works such as "War Diary," [観戦日記] which described the Sino-Japanese war and his "London Reports" [竜動通信] from 1910. In 1912, he wrote a positive critique of Nakano's "History of the Meiji Freedom and People's Rights Movement". (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 105, 142, 145, and 153-56.)



**Nishio Suehiro** [西尾末広] (1891 - 1981), *politician and labor activist*. Born in Kagawa prefecture, Nishio belonged to the right wing of the social democratic movement. He participated in the foundation of the Social Democratic Party in 1926. In March 1940, he was expelled from the Social Mass Party for opposing the decision to expel MP Saitō Takao, who had held a speech critical of the army's holy war in China. From 1942 to 1943, he cooperated with Nakano in opposing Tōjō. After WW2 he founded the Japan Socialist Party and became its secretary, but he left in protest of the US-Japanese Peace Treaty. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 337-55.)

**Ochi Hikoshirō** [越智彦四郎] (1849 - 1877), *samurai of the Fukuoka-han and leader of the Fukuoka uprising*. Ochi studied at the domain's school, Shūyūkan, before fighting and earning some glory in the Boshin War of 1868. He participated in the suppression of the Saga rebellion of 1874 (during a meeting with Ōkubo Toshimichi, he asked for outside mediation in the conflict but was refused). Inspired by the outbreak of the Satsuma rebellion, he and Takebe Koshirō led a force of 850 samurai against their domain's castle. In the aftermath of the rebellion, he tried to secretly join the Army of Saigō, but was discovered and executed. (See Kokuryūkai [黒竜会] eds., Records from the South-West [西南記伝], Tokyo: Hara Shobō [原書房], 1969 and History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992.)

**Ogata Taketora** [緒方竹虎] (1888 - 1956), *journalist, statesman and life-long friend of Nakano's*. Born in Yamagata prefecture, Ogata was brought up in Fukuoka, where he became Nakano's classmate at the Shūyūkan. Aiming for a career in business, he first enrolled at Hitotsubashi University but then was persuaded by Nakano to switch to Waseda. Ogata also followed Nakano into journalism, joining him at the *Asahi News* desk in 1911. When Nakano left the *Asahi*, however, to become a politician and invited Ogata to do the same, Ogata stayed in

journalism. Steadily rising through the ranks of the *Asahi*, he became managing director (1925) and editor-in-chief (1934). As a liberal, he confronted the rise of militarism in the 1930s. Ogata finally entered politics after Nakano's death, first serving as state minister and head of the Information Bureau in the wartime Koiso Kuniaki cabinet, a position from which Ogata attempted to negotiate a separate peace with the Chiang Kai-shek government in China. Immediately after Japan's surrender, he played a crucial role as state minister and chief cabinet secretary of Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko's cabinet in arranging for the peaceful arrival of the Allied Occupation forces in Japan. After being barred from public activities by the U.S. Occupation forces, he was elected to the House of Representatives (1952) and served as deputy Prime Minister (1952-54). He became president of the Liberal Party [自由党] in 1954 and served as one of the four deputies of the newly formed (1955) Liberal Democratic Party [自由民主党].

**Ōishi Masaru** [大石大] (1878 - 1966), *politician, farmers' activist and member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Kōchi prefecture, he studied at Kansai Law School [関西法律学校], (present-day Kansai University [関西大学]). First elected to the Diet in 1920 as a member of the Seiyūkai, he was subsequently re-elected five times, joining the Tōhōkai in 1937. In 1929, he founded the Tosa Farmers' General Union [土佐農民総組合], leading the movement against the system of price inspections [米穀検査制度反対運動]. Already a member of parliament, he joined the Tōhōkai in 1936 but failed to be returned to his seat in the 1937 and 1942 elections. During the war, he opposed the IRAA and after the war he joined the peace movement. (See Ōishi Masaru [大石大], "Eighty Years of Windy Springs and Rainy Autums – the Autobiography of Ōishi Masaru" [春風秋雨八十年 : 大石大自伝], Tokyo 1964, p. 323 and Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-34 as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 245-47, 360, 371, and 378-87.)

**Okamoto Ippei** [岡本一平] (1886 - 1948), *cartoonist and father of artist Okamoto Tarō*.

Born in Hokkaidō, Okamoto graduated from Tokyo Art School [東京美術学校] and first went into theatre. In 1926, he began drawing comics for the *Asahi News*. He wrote a mildly satirical comment on Nakano's virgin speech in the Diet in 1920.

**Okano Ryūichi** [岡野龍一] (1893 -?), *politician*. Born in Hiroshima prefecture, he was a member of the Minseitō Adachi faction and then of the Kokumin Dōmei. He served later as member of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. His wife was from Fukuoka. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 115 Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 421, 466, 531, and 642.)

**Okazaki Kunisuke** [岡崎邦輔] (1854 - 1936), *politician*. Okazaki was born in 1854 into a high-ranking samurai family serving the Kishū-han. After the Meiji restoration, he followed his cousin Mutsu Munemitsu (1844 - 1897) to Tokyo, and also followed him to America (1888) when the latter was appointed ambassador to the U.S. Okazaki enrolled at the University of Michigan. After returning to Japan he was elected to the Diet in 1891, and then re-elected consecutively 10 times. Okazaki entered the Jiyūtō in 1897 and later the Seiyūkai. He served as minister of Agriculture and Forestry in the Katō cabinet of 1925 and, in 1928, he was made member of the House of Peers. Okazaki helped Nakano find a new house after the latter's return from Europe in 1916. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 108, 128, 157, 195, 206, 217-19, 400-08, and 507.)

**Omachi Keigetsu** [大町桂月] (1869 - 1925) *poet, essayist, and critic and Nakano's boss at the Tokyo Daily News*. Born in Kouchi prefecture as a son of a samurai, Omachi graduated

from the department of literature of Tokyo Imperial University in 1896 and first worked as a middle-school teacher in Shimane prefecture while making himself a name as a writer through publications in magazines such as *Bungei Club* [文芸倶楽部] and *Sun* [太陽]. To the end of his life, Omachi liked drinking sake and traveling. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 83-84.)

**Ōnishi Itsuki (or Sai)** [大西齋] (1887 - 1947), *journalist*. One year Nakano's junior, Ōnishi was born in Fukuoka prefecture and also attended the Shūyūkan middle school, where he practiced *jūdō* at the Genyōsha's dōjō and graduated in 1908. He then enrolled at the Tōa Dōbun Shoin [東亜同文書院], a Japanese institution for higher learning in Shanghai, where he studied Chinese language. After graduating in 1911, he joined the *Asahi News* and there joined the faction of Yugeta, Nakano and Ogata. In 1917, he was posted to Shanghai and two years later to Beijing. After his return to Japan in 1924 he advanced to head the China section in 1925. In an editorial written days before the Manchurian Incident of 1931, Ōnishi approved of independent military action, which in retrospect has been seen as a first break with the hitherto anti-militaristic, pro-arms-limitation stance of the *Asahi News*. When the *Tokyo Asahi* under editor-in-chief Ogata Taketora established the East Asian Research Institute [東亜問題調査会] in 1934, Ōnishi, known as an expert on Chinese affairs, was made its managing director. With several of this institute's members, Ōnishi also joined Konoe Fumimaro's Shōwa Research Institute [昭和研究会] in 1936. He was promoted to vice-editor-in-chief in 1939 and left in April 1946. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 85, 105-6, 216, and 666.)

**Ono Ken'ichi** [小野謙一] (1886 - 1963), *politician and member of the Tōhōkai*. Born in Aomori prefecture, Ono studied at Meiji University. He later worked as a journalist for the *Hokushin Nippō* [北辰日報], as head of political affairs at the *Yamato News* [やまと新聞], and as editor-in-chief at the *Pacific News Service* [太平洋通信社]. He ran unsuccessfully for election

affiliated with Nakano in 1936 but won in 1937. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 245 and Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; pp. 130-34.)

**Oshikawa Masayoshi** [押川方義] (1852 - 1928), *priest, educator and politician*. Born in Ehime prefecture, Oshikawa studied English at the Shūbunkan in Yokohama, where he also converted to Christianity. Initially active as a Christian educator, he also ventured into business (coal and oil mining) but failed (1901) and then moved on to politics, serving twice as member of the Diet. Like Nakano, he belonged to the Mushozoku Club in the early 1920s. In the later part of his life, he moved away from Christianity and leaned toward Confucianism.

**Ōshima Hiroshi** [大島浩] (1886 - 1975), *army officer and Foreign Service official who helped Nakano get an appointment with Hitler*. Born in Gifu prefecture as the eldest son of a military family, Oshima graduated from the Army War College. Having established ties to later Nazi leaders during his first stay in Germany in the early twenties, he returned as military *attaché* in 1934 and after joining the reserve was made ambassador in Berlin. In that capacity, he was crucial in promoting the Tripartite Alliance signed in 1940. Ōshima was tried and sentenced to life-long imprisonment as a type-A war criminal after the war but was pardoned in 1955. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 303-5, 394-97, 513-16, and 591.)

**Ōtake Kan'ichi** [大竹貫一] (1860 - 1944), *politician*. Born in Niigata prefecture, Ōtake graduated from the Niigata School of English. As a member of the Niigata prefectural assembly, Ōtake built a strong electoral support base within the prefecture. In 1890, he became a co-founder of the Kokken-tō [国権党] and in 1894 he was elected to the Diet for the first time of a total of 16 times. During WW1, Ōtake advocated cuts in armament spending and universal suffrage. In the course of his career, he was a member of the Shinpo-tō, Yūkō-kai, Kennsei-kai, Kakushin Club,

Kakushin-tō, and the Kokumin Dōmei. He was appointed to the upper house in 1939 but resigned in 1940. The last article written by Ōtake was about Nakano. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 62 and vol. 2, p. 271 and 371.)

**Ōya Sōichi** [大宅壮一] (1900 - 1970), *commentator and critic*. Born in Osaka, Ōya studied at Tokyo Imperial University but did not graduate. In 1926, he had his debut as a writer in *Bungei* magazine and after the war became a well-known commentator on political and social affairs. In an article in 1952, Ōya questioned whether Nakano should be seen as a hero just because he opposed Tōjō, and pointed out that Nakano too bore responsibility for Japan's entry into the war. In 1965 he won the Kikuchi Prize.

**Ōyama Ikuo** [大山郁夫] (1880 - 1955), *politician and socialist activist*. Born in Hyōgo prefecture, Ōyama graduated from Waseda University. After teaching at the Waseda from 1915 to 1917, he joined the *Osaka Asahi News*. A leader of the Taishō democracy movement, Ōyama later turned socialist and went into exile to the US during the WW2. After the war, he was active in the peace movement. He published in Nakano's magazine *Gakan* during the early 1920s. (Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 364, and 472.)

**Ozaki Shirō** [尾崎士郎] (1898 - 1964), *writer*. Born in Aichi prefecture, Ozaki went to Waseda University but withdrew before graduating. Leaning toward the left in his younger years, Ozaki later became a popular mainstream author, becoming famous through his bestselling "The Human Theatre" [人生劇場]. He was deeply impressed by Nakano's report from the Paris Peace Conference.

**Rai Sanyō** [頼山陽] (1781 - 1832), *Confucian scholar*. Born in Osaka, Rai studied in Edo

and later served at Aki domain near Hiroshima. At the age of 21, he was punished with house arrest for trying to leave the domain. During his house arrest, he wrote a history of Japan [日本外史] that had great influence on the restoration activists of the *bakumatsu* years. He later opened a school in Kyōto, displaying talents as a poet and writer. Nakano used Rai's History of Japan as a textbook in his lectures at the Tōhōkai academy in 1942-3.

**Saitō Takao** [斎藤隆夫] (1870 - 1949), *politician*. Born in Hyōgo prefecture, Saitō entered Tokyo Senmon Gakkō (today Waseda University) in 1884, majoring in political science. In 1895, he passed the law examination and worked as a lawyer, saving money to study at Yale University in the US. Due to illness he had to interrupt his studies at Yale and return to Japan. In 1912, he was elected to the Diet and was subsequently re-elected 13 times, serving as Member of Parliament until 1949, first in the Rikken Kokumintō and later in the Rikken Dōshikai, the Kenseikai and the Minseitō. Although promoted to head of general affairs of the Kenseikai/Minseitō in 1927, Saitō failed to build himself a power base or following. He was given the position of parliamentary Vice-minister of the Interior under the Hamaguchi cabinet and again under the Saitō cabinet, as well as the position of head of the law bureau in the second Wakatsuki cabinet, but never obtained a ministerial portfolio. Following the Manchurian Incident, the February 26, 1936 Incident and the China Incident, Saitō became an outspoken critic of the Army. This anti-militaristic attitude culminated in a famous speech Saitō held in the Diet in February 1940 that led to his expulsion from the lower house in March. Saitō was reelected to the Diet in the 1942 election. After WW2, he participated in the foundation of the Japan Progressive Party [日本進歩党] and served as minister in the first Yoshida Shigeru cabinet and the Katayama Tetsu cabinet. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, 170-77, 435-36, 40, and 461.)

**Sano Manabu** [佐野学] (1892 - 1953), *social activist and leader of the Japanese*

*Communist Party*. Born in Ōita Prefecture, Sano graduated from the faculty of political science of Tokyo Imperial University in 1917. He continued his studies at Tōdai, concentrating in agricultural policy and there also became a member of the Shinjinkai. Following a brief employment with the Manchurian railway, he took up a position as lecturer at Waseda University, where he became a member/leader in various societies such as the Constructionist League [建設者同盟], the Enlightenment Society [暁民会] and the Culture Society [文化会]. In July 1922, he joined the newly founded Japanese Communist Party and there became responsible for the creation of a Japanese Communist Youth organization. During that time he met with Nakano, who was actively campaigning for the speedy recognition of Soviet Russia. When many communists were arrested in June of the following year, Sano fled to Russia. Following his return he founded and wrote for the *Proletarian News* [無産者新聞]. He was arrested in Shanghai in 1929. In 1933, he recanted [転向] his communist views in court, opposing the Comintern and instead advocating a socialist system in one state. The *tenkō* of the JCP's leader had a great impact on the base of the party and in its aftermath many communists recanted, following Sano's example. After the war, Sano continued to oppose communist Russia and returned to lecture at Waseda. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 338, 354, 621, and 719.)

**Sasagawa Ryōichi** [笹川良一] (1899 - 1995), *right-wing activist and politician*. Born in Osaka, Sasakawa founded the National Mass Party [国粋大衆党] in 1931, serving as its president. He was elected to the Diet in 1942. Together with Nakano, Miki and Hatoyama, he opposed the Wartime Criminal Law introduced into the Diet in early 1943. After the war, he was arrested as a class-A wartime criminal but subsequently the charges were dropped. Following his release, he became president of the National Motorboat Racing League but continued to be involved in politics. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, 710-11.)



**Satō Morio** [佐藤守男] (? - ?), *member of the Tōhōkai and leader of the party's youth organization*. Born in Kurume-city in Fukuoka prefecture, Satō joined the Tōhōkai after being released from the Army on account of an injury received on the Chinese front. Within the party he was made vice-head of the youth organization under Nagata Masayoshi. He later wrote a biography of Nakano. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 425 and 473 as well as Satō Morio [佐藤守男], “Nakano Seigō” [中野正剛], Tokyo: Kasumigaseki-shobō, 1951.)

**Shibata Fumishiro** [柴田文城] (1868 - 1953), *scholar of Chinese classics and Nakano's teacher*. Born as the son of a village headman in Fukuoka, Shibata studied at the academy of Masaki Shōyō [正木昌陽塾]. In 1888, he graduated from the Fukuoka-prefecture teachers' school and subsequently worked as a primary school teacher, commuting to school on a white horse and teaching Nakano Seigō as well as Ogata Taketora. Shibata retired from his teaching position in 1907 and subsequently served in the prefectural assembly. Throughout his life, Shibata supported Nakano, for example by speaking on his behalf during election campaigns or acting as advisor to the *Kyūshū Nippō* while Nakano presided over the paper. (See Hamachi Masaemon [濱地政右衛門], “The Patriot, Nakano Seigō” [憂国の士・中野正剛], Fukuoka: Kaitōsha [海鳥社], 2010, p. 15-16.)

**Shiga Shigetaka** [志賀重昂] (1863 - 1927), *intellectual, geographer and politician*. Born as the son of a retainer in the service of the Okazaki domain, Shiga graduated from the Sapporo agricultural school in 1884. Having witnessed the impact of Western imperialism in Oceania, he came to take a hard line against the powers. Together with Miyake Setsurei he founded a nationalist society in 1887. He served in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and was twice elected as Member of Parliament. His “Views of Japan” [日本風景論] (1894) became a

bestseller.

**Shigemitsu Mamoru** [重光葵] (1887 - 1957), *diplomat and politician*. Born in Ōita prefecture, Shigemitsu graduated from Tokyo Imperial University's faculty of law and then joined the Foreign Service. Appointed envoy to China in August 1931, he lived through the dramatic events surrounding the Manchurian Incident and later the Shanghai Incident. In a terrorist bomb attack carried out by a Korean independence fighter, he lost his leg. Between 1933 and 1936 he served as Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs under Hirota Kōki. In this capacity his main focus lay on Chinese policy, through which he attempted to push Western influence out of China while strengthening Japan's position. In 1938, he was appointed ambassador to England, where he experienced the outbreak of WW2. Shigemitsu opposed the escalation of the Chinese Incident of the Konoe cabinet as well as the decision to join the Triple Alliance, which he believed was based on over-estimating Germany's military strength. After the outbreak of the Pacific War, he became ambassador to Japan's puppet government in China under Wang Ching-wei. From April 1943, he served as Foreign Minister of the Tōjō and Koiso cabinets and then again in the post-war cabinet of Prince Higashikuni, in which capacity he became one of the signatories of the unconditional surrender on September 2, 1945. In 1946, Shigemitsu was put on trial as a wartime criminal, found guilty and purged from public office. After his release, he founded the Kaishintō, and later became Foreign Minister in the Hatoyama Ichirō cabinet of 1954. His works include: "The Disturbances of Shōwa" [昭和の混乱], "Records of the Diplomacy of Shigemitsu Mamoru" [重光葵外交回想録] and "The Sugamo Diaries" [巣鴨日記]. (See also Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 347 and 748.)

**Shimomura Nobusada** [下村信禎] (1899 - ?), *diplomat*. Born in Fukuoka prefecture, Shimomura went to Tokyo Imperial University to study political science, graduating in 1923.

After 1931, he worked in various positions in the administration of the state of Manshūkoku. He traveled to Europe with Nakano in 1937. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 282.)

**Shimonaka Yasaburō** [下中弥三郎] (1878 - 1961), *publisher, educator and politician.*

Born in Hyōgo prefecture, he first worked as an elementary school teacher and in 1919 founded Japan's first teachers' union. In 1914, he founded Heibon-sha publishing and published an encyclopedia. Following the Manchurian Incident, Shimonaka moved to the right and became politically active, also participating in the establishment of the IRAA. In the post-war period, he joined the peace movement. Nakano had hoped that Shimonaka would join the Kokumin Dōmei in 1932, but instead Shimonaka preferred to found the National Socialist Party with Akamatsu Katsumaro.

**Shin Tê-kuang** [岑德広] (1897 - 1945?), *politician who boarded with Nakano's family while a student in Tokyo.* Shin was the son of a high-ranking Chinese politician, Shin Ch'un-ken [岑春愷]. After leaving Japan, he initially worked in an English think tank and then entered politics. Shin attended the Washington Conference of 1922 as a member of the Chinese delegation. He also served in the Japanese puppet government set up in China during the early 1940s. It is not known what became of him after the surrender of Japan in 1945. (Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 80-81, 113, 580, and 659.)

**Shintō Kazuma** [進藤一馬] (1904 - 1992), *politician, right-wing activist and Nakano's secretary during the 1930s.* Shintō was born in Fukuoka-city as the fourth son of the Genyōsha member Shintō Kiheita [進藤嘉平太]. After graduating from Waseda in 1926, he first worked as Nakano's secretary (while Nakano worked at the Minister of Communications) and later got involved in the Kokumin Dōmei and the Tōhōkai. Shintō also worked as editor of Miyake

Setsurei's *Gakan* magazine. In 1943, he became president of the *Kyūshū Nippō* (the Genyōsha organ that later merged with the *Fukuoka Nichi-Nichi Shimbun* to become the *Nishi-Nihon Shimbun*). Together with Nakano, he was arrested in 1943 for opposing the Tōjō government. In 1944, Shintō became president of the Genyōsha. After the war, he was prosecuted and imprisoned as a type A war criminal. After his release in 1952, he reorganized the former members of the Genyōsha into a new association. In 1958, he was elected to the Diet as a representative of Fukuoka (affiliated with the LDP). He failed to be reelected in 1960 but won in 1963 and in the following two elections. In 1972, he was elected mayor of Fukuoka-city, where he passionately embarked upon a policy of making Fukuoka green, becoming famous for saving a cherry tree from getting cut down as part of a road project. He was re-elected four times and retired from the mayorship only in 1986 due to his age, thereafter assuming the post of director of the Fukuoka art museum and the Genyōsha Memorial Hall [玄洋社記念会館]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 19, 403-4, 464, 573-4 and vol. 2, p. 28, 182, 186, 290, 472, 707, 753, and 784.)

**Shintō Kiheita** [進藤喜平太] (1850 - 1925), *Genyōsha founder*. Born into a samurai family in Fukuoka, Shintō studied at the domain's school, Bunpu-kan [文武館], before entering the Ginseng –Field School sometime after 1870. He joined the Hagi rebellion in 1876 and was subsequently imprisoned. After his release, he became active in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. Central to the foundation of the Genyōsha, he served as the society's second president. Shintō actively promoted the development of Fukuoka Harbor and from 1905 served as the mayor of Fukuoka city. (See History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992, *Seinan Kiden* [西南記伝]; 1969 but especially Nakano's mourning address on the occasion of Shintō's funeral, "Shintō Kiheita" reproduced in Ogata, p. 103-08.)

**Shiōden (also Shiōten) Nobutaka** [四王天延孝] (1879 - 1962), *army officer*. Born in Saitama prefecture, Shiōden graduated from the Army War College. During WW1, he served as a military observer in France and later rose through the ranks of the army's air branch before serving as the Army's representative at the League of Nations. He entered the Army reserve in 1929 and became director of the Imperial Aeronautic Association [帝国飛行協会]. In 1942 he was elected to the Diet. Shiōden gained notoriety for his “Jewish Thoughts and Movements,” [ユダヤ思想及運動] published in 1941, in which he expressed strong anti-Semitic and anti-masonry ideas

**Shiozawa Masasada** [塩沢昌貞] (1870 - 1945), *economist*. Born in Ibaragi Prefecture, Shiozawa attended Waseda University and later studied in America and Germany. Then he returned to Waseda to teach economics – among others to Nakano – and eventually became the University's president. Shiozawa was said to have been Ōkuma Shigenobu's “Encyclopedia” [知恵袋]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 75, 235, 679, and 749.)

**Shirayanagi Shūko** [白柳秀湖] (1884 - 1950) *novelist*. Born in Shizuoka prefecture, Shirayanagi graduated from Waseda University. Influenced by the socialist movement, he initially wrote proletarian literature and history. He contributed articles to Nakano's magazines in the 1920s.

**Shiratori Toshio** [白鳥敏夫] (1887 - 1949), *diplomat instrumental in negotiating the Triple Alliance*. Born in Chiba prefecture, Shiratori graduated from Tokyo Imperial University before joining the Foreign Service, where he established a reputation for his hard-line views. After becoming ambassador to Italy in 1938, he promoted the Triple Alliance. He was elected to the Diet in 1942. After the war, he was sentenced to imprisonment for life as a class-A wartime

criminal. He died in prison. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, 616-19, 648-9, 666-70, 696 and vol. 2, p. 396-7, and 418.)

**Song Jiaoren** (Song Jiao Ren) [宋教仁] (1882 - 1913), *Chinese republican revolutionary and leader; founder of the Kuomintang*. A follower of Huang Xing, Song fled to Japan in 1904 where he studied Western political thought and made contacts with Japanese pan-Asianists including Inukai Tsuyoshi, Kita Ikki etc.. With Sun Yat-sen, he was instrumental in the foundation of the Tongmenghui, an organization aimed at overthrowing the Qing dynasty. Song returned to China around 1910, participating in the republican revolution of the following year. When in the aftermath of the revolution, Yuan Shikai set out to establish a monarchical system, Song opposed him. Under his leadership, the Kuomintang won the first general election and Song was considered the most likely candidate for the premiership. Song was assassinated in March 1913 and it is suspected that the assassination was carried out on orders of Yuan Shikai. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 112, and vol. 2, p. 140.)

**Sugimori Kōjirō** [杉森孝次郎] (1881 - 1968), *scholar and social scientist*. Born in Shizuoka prefecture, Sugimori graduated from Waseda University in 1906 and then stayed on to become a lecturer. Receiving a Mombushō scholarship, he traveled to Europe in 1913 and stayed there until 1919, studying first in Germany and then in England. Upon his return to Japan, he became professor of literature and political economy at Waseda. Close to Nakano after meeting him in London during WW1, Sugimori became Nakano's friend and scientific advisor and often published articles in Nakano's magazines. After Japan's surrender, Sugimori was part of the Constitution Research Society [憲法研究会], which submitted a proposal for a new constitution to the U.S. occupation forces in late 1945. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 190-96, 271, 279, 183, 364-65, 641-43, and vol. 2, p. 109-115.)

**Sugiura Jūgō** [杉浦重剛] (1855 - 1924), *politician and educator*. Born into a samurai family of the Zeze-domain (present-day Shiga prefecture), Sugiura went twice to England as a student on a government scholarship, studying natural sciences. Upon his return, he first taught at Tokyo Imperial University and then founded the Tokyo School of English [東京英学校] in 1885. In 1888, he and Miyake Setsurei founded the Seikyōsha, which published the magazine *The Japanese* [日本人]. A year later he started the newspaper *Japan* [日本]. In his writings, Sugiura criticized that Japan's wholesale import of Western culture was threatening to destroy its own unique culture. Elected to the Diet in 1900, he withdrew from his seat after the first session.

**Sugiura Takeo** [杉浦武雄] (1890 - ?), *member of the Kokumin Dōmei and Tōhōkai*. Born in Aichi prefecture, Sugiura studied law at Tokyo Imperial University, graduating in 1916. After passing the civil service exam, he served in the colonial administration in Korea. Elected to the Diet in 1924, he was re-elected five times. Sugiura was a member of the Nakano faction within the Kokumin Dōmei and later the Tōhōkai (elected in 1936 and 1937). He failed to be re-elected in the recommended election of 1942. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 115, 127, 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 83 and 166.)

**Sumita Masao** [住田正雄] (1878 - 1946), *medical doctor who botched Nakano's leg surgery in 1926*. Born in Hyōgo prefecture, Sumita studied medicine at Tokyo Imperial University and then worked as assistant professor at Kyōto Imperial University and Kyūshū Imperial University hospitals before going to Germany to study further. His specialty was surgeries to treat inflammations of joints caused by tuberculosis and bone deformations. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, 423-24, 331, 388, 583 and 801.)

**Sun Hung-i** [孫 洪伊] (1872 - 1936), *Chinese politician of the late imperial and early republican periods who met Nakano in 1918*. After having been active as a businessman and educator in Tientsin, Sun served the government and Yuan Shi-kai until he resigned in opposition to the latter's imperial aspirations. Thereafter he served in the republican government in Nanking, supporting Sun Yat-sen. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 257.)

**Suzuki Bunji** [鈴木文治] (1885 - 1946) *labor activist*. Born in Miyagi prefecture, Suzuki graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1909. Suzuki co-founded the Yūaikai [友愛会] in 1912. Later he served as member of parliament for the Social Mass Party [社会大衆党] and the Social Democratic Party [社会民衆党]. Suzuki headed the Communications Union before Nakano became its president in the early 1930s. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 471.)

**Suzuki Shōgo** [鈴木正吾] (1890 - 1977), *politician*. Born in Aichi prefecture, Suzuki studied at Meiji University and then became a journalist, working, among others, for the *Yomiuri News* and as editor of the magazine *Daikan* [大観]. A follower of Ozaki Yukio, he was first elected to the Diet in 1932. He was subsequently re-elected a total of seven times, serving as MP in the post-war period. Suzuki was a member of the Nakano faction in the Kokumin Dōmei and then later of the Tōhōkai. In 1942, he ran as a Tōhōkai candidate and was successfully elected. In 1955, he became mayor of Toyokawa-city in Aichi prefecture.

**Tabuchi Toyokichi** [田渕豊吉] (1882 - 1943), *politician and member of the lower house*. Born in 1882 in Wakayama prefecture, into a family of sake brewers and land owners, he entered Waseda University's department of political economy in 1905 (with Nakano). Between 1908 and 1915 he studied politics, philosophy and economics abroad, first in Germany but after the



outbreak of WW1 also in England, France and America. He was first elected to the Diet in 1920, advocating, among other issues, female participation in politics. During the early 1920s, he was often grouped together with Nakano and Nagai Ryarō under the label: “The Three Waseda Crows.” Following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, he held a speech in the Diet condemning the atrocities committed against Korean nationals in the aftermath of the calamity. After the assassination of Chang Tsuo-lin he and Nakano held a number of speeches demanding the investigation of the incident and the army’s role in it. In 1929 he married at the age of 47, but his wife died just three years later. Not affiliated with any political party, Tabuchi continued to maintain an independent stance in the parliament. In 1941, he criticized Tōjō for his leadership in the Pacific War (interrupting Tōjō’s speech and leaving the floor in protest). (See Koyama Jinji [小山仁示], Tabuchi Toyokichi and Nakano Seigō [田淵豊吉と中野], in *Asahi Journal* [朝日ジャーナル], April 7, 1972, p. 31 – 38.)

**Takabatake Motoyuki** [高畠素之] (1886 - 1928), *social scientist and translator of the first full translation of Karl Marx’s “Das Kapital.”* Born in Gumma Prefecture, he was baptized in 1899 and entered the school of theology of Dōshisha University in 1904 but withdrew after having doubts about Christianity. Imprisoned following the Red-Flag Incident, he used the prison term to start translating Marx’s “Das Kapital.” He did not complete all three parts until 1924. In the early 1920s, Takabatake was a member of the Rōsōkai, to which Nakano also belonged. In the second half of the 1920s, he came to embrace National Socialism [国家社会主義]. After the introduction of universal suffrage, he tried to organize a New National Socialist Party that would have brought together social democrats, nationalists, and military leaders. He failed to see its realization as he died of cancer. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 777.)

**Takagi Masatoshi** [高木正年] (1857 - 1934), *politician*. Born in Tokyo, Takagi had been a member of the Diet since its opening in 1890. He lost his eyesight in 1896 but continued to be active in politics, advocating universal suffrage and citizens' rights for women. He also actively sought to support the integration of blind people into society. Takagi and Nakano were both members of the Mushozoku Club in the Diet in the early 1920s.

**Takagi Rikurō** [高木陸郎] (? - ?), *businessman*. Little is known about Takagi. Starting off as a journalist, Takagi at one point he worked for Tōa Tsūshō [東亜通商] and at another point as the Beijing correspondent of the *Jiji News* [時事新聞]. Thereafter he continued to have an interest in Chinese affairs. From around 1917, he worked for the Mitsui Zaibatsu, procuring financial support for Nakano in that year's general election. He later facilitated a loan on behalf of Nakano with which the latter bought his first house in Harajuku. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 219, 235, 281, 314, 459, 607 and vol. 2, p. 95 and 499.)

**Takahashi Jutarō** [高橋寿太郎] (1879 - ?), *politician and member of the Nakano faction within the Kokumin Dōmei*. Born in Iwate prefecture, Takahashi graduated from the Navy War College and then served in various positions in the Japanese Navy before entering the reserve and running successfully for election in 1928.

**Takao Heibei** [高尾平兵衛] (1895 - 1923), *social activist*. Born into a Nagasaki merchant family, Takao first worked in the pastry business before being attracted by anarchist and socialist thought. In the years after WW1, he was sentenced to several short prison terms (among others for printing a work of Kropotkin). It was during that time that he also joined the Rōsōkai and Nakano's Yūshin-sha, where he made Nakano's acquaintance. In 1922, Takao travelled to Russia and met with Lenin. Upon his return, he joined the Japanese Communist Party but he left it soon

thereafter. He was shot by an anti-socialist activist the following year. After his death, Nakano wrote a piece arguing about the futility of trying to suppress communist thought by force, in which he also described their first encounters. (See Nakano Seigō, Editorial, *Tōhōjiron* August 1923 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 364-66.)

**Takayama Hikokurō** [高山彦九郎] (1747 - 1793), *political activist of the Edo period.*

Takayama was a samurai from Kōzuke domain and is best known for his eccentric character and political activities. An early activist for the cause of imperial restoration during the Tokugawa period, Takayama traveled through Japan preaching loyalty to the Emperor. Eventually, he was put under arrest by the *bakufu* in Kurume Kyūshū, where he committed suicide. In an article written after Nakano's death, Tōyama compared Nakano's suicide to that of Takayama.

**Takebe Koshirō** [武部小四郎] (1846 - 1877), *saumurai (shishi) and political radical of the Fukuoka-han.* With the outbreak of the Satsuma rebellion, Takebe and Ochi Hikoshirō led a force of 850 samurai against the domain's castle. Following the defeat of the Fukuoka uprising, he went into hiding, but was found and executed. (See Kokuryūkai [黒竜会] eds., Records from the South-West [西南記伝], Tokyo: Hara Shobō [原書房], 1969 and History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992) as well as Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 35, 46, 47 and 52.)

**Tanabe Osamu** [田辺納] (1902 - 1980), *farmers' movement activist and, from 1938, member of the Tōhōkai.* Born in Osaka, Tanabe served as permanent secretary in the Izumi League of the Japan Farmers' Union [日本農民組合和泉(いずみ)連合会]. After its breakup, he served as director of the Osaka chapter of the All-Japan Farmers Union [全国農民組合大阪府連

合会]. A member of the Social Mass Party, he withdrew in 1938 and joined Nakano's Tōhōkai. He travelled to Vietnam (French Indochina) and afterward published a report (See Tanabe Osamu, "French Indochina on the Eve of the Occupation: Research and Travel Report" [進駐前夜の仏領印度支那 : 調査報告と紀行], Tokyo, 1941). In 1942, he ran as a candidate of the Tōhōkai but lost. After the war, he continued to be active in the farmers' movement and the socialist party. (See Nagai, Kazuo: "The Development of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の発展] in *Journal of History* [史林], January 1979, vol. 62, no.1; p. 101, p. 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 425.)

**Tanaka Kiyotatsu** [田中養達] (1885 - ?), *doctor and politician*. Born in Shiga prefecture Tanaka as the second-born son of Imamura Eijirō, Kiyotatsu was later adopted into the Tanaka family. Kiyotatsu first worked as a gynecologist before entering politics. He was elected five times to the Diet but also served on the provincial assembly of Shiga prefecture. He was a member of the Minseitō, the Kokumin Dōmei and later the Tōhōkai, and was elected in 1936 and 1937 but not in 1942. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 115, 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. p. 103, 245, 378079, and 387.)

**Tanaka Kōtarō** [田中耕太郎] (1890 - 1974), *legal scholar and high-ranking judge*. Born as son to a judge in Kagoshima, Tanaka attended the Shūyūkan in Fukuoka and later studied law at Tokyo Imperial University, graduating at the top of his class in 1915. After working for the Ministry of the Interior for a year and a half, he withdrew and returned to teach law at Tokyo Imperial University. Around this time, he also came under the influence of Christianity. After studying in Europe, he returned to teach commercial law at Tokyo Imperial University in 1924. He was baptized a catholic by the head of Sophia University in 1926. In 1929, he earned his

doctorate in law and in 1937 he was made head of the law department of Tokyo Imperial University. After the war, Tanaka served as Minister of Education in the first Yoshida Cabinet, as a member of parliament, and from 1950 onward as judge on various high-ranking courts.

**Ting Chien-hsiu** (Ding Jian Xiu) [丁鑑修] (1886 - 1944), *politician and educator*. Like Nakano, Ting studied political science and economics at Waseda and, according to his own recollection, relied heavily on Nakano's help in his studies. Upon returning to China, he worked in various government positions before teaching at the Chinese military and police academy. A member of the Japan-friendly faction within the Chinese government, he cooperated with the Japanese army after the assassination of Chang Tsuo-lin in 1928 and especially after the Manchurian Incident of 1931, which earned him the position of Minister of Transport in the administration of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo. Ting and Nakano met during Nakano's frequent visits to China. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, 665-68, and 760.)

**Toda Yumi** [戸田由美] (1886 - ?), *politician and member of the Nakano faction within the Kokumin Dōmei*. Born in Nagano prefecture, Toda graduated from Keiō University in 1910, majoring in finance. As a member of the Minseitō, he was elected to the Diet and served as secretary to Hamaguchi during the latter's premiership. After resigning from that position he worked for the *Daily News* [毎日新聞]. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 123-25.)

**Tokutomi Sohō** [徳富蘇峰] (1863 - 1957), *journalist, and friend of Nakano's*. Born in Kumamoto prefecture, Tokutomi became Christian as a youth and studied at the Dōshisha [同志社]. After returning to his native province, he joined the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. He opened a private school in 1882 but closed it in 1886 and went to Tokyo, devoting himself to

writing. His early publications made him very popular among the Meiji youth. In 1890, he founded the *Kokumin Shimbun* [国民新聞], targeting a mass audience. Around the outbreak of the first Sino-Japanese war of 1895, he took a hard-line stance on foreign policy issues, an attitude that was confirmed and hardened during a trip to Europe in 1897. Aligning himself closely to Katsura Tarō in the late Meiji and early Taishō periods, he and his paper became the target of multiple attacks (the paper's offices were twice burned down). After Katsura's death, Tokutomi increasingly preached the centrality of the Imperial Household. He left the management of the *Kokumin Shimbun* in 1929 because of financial difficulties and henceforth worked for the *Osaka Mainichi News*. Tokutomi first met Nakano while the latter was in Korea as a correspondent of the *Asahi* in 1913-4 and immediately liked him as a person, though he did not always agree with Nakano politically. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 19, 84, 108, 142 and vol. 2, p. 71, 271, 282, 283, 335, 371-76, and 508.)

**Tokutomi Roka** [徳富蘆花] (1868 - 1927), *novelist and younger brother of Tokutomi Sohō*.

Roka met Nakano while the latter was posted in Korea in 1913-4. Born in Kumamoto prefecture, Tokutomi was educated at Dōshisha English School, where he also received his Christian baptism. He became famous through novels such as “Nature and Man” [自然と人生] (1900), and “Footprints in the Snow,” which was translated by Kenneth Strong (1970). (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, 142, and vol. 2, p. 101, 140, and 191.)

**Tomita Kōjirō** [富田幸次郎] (1897 - 1938), *journalist and politician*. Born in Kōchi Prefecture, Tomita studied art and later worked as a journalist for newspapers in Shikoku. In 1907, he ran for election for the first time, won a seat in the Diet and was subsequently reelected nine times. Tomita was a co-founder of the Rikken Dōshikai and a member of the Adachi faction within the Minseitō, where he served as director. Enjoying the trust of both the bureaucrat and

party-politician factions of the party, Tomita often acted as a go-between or bridge between these two groups. Following the failure of the Minseito-Seiyukai coalition cabinet, Tomita briefly left the Minseitō but re-joined in 1933. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 554 and 623-38.)

**Tomita Yūtarō** [富田勇太郎] (1883 - 1946), *higher-ranking bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance and banker*. Like Nakano, Tomita was born into a samurai family of the Fukuoka domain and attended the Shūyūkan. From there, however, he went on to study at Tokyo Imperial University, graduating in 1908 and going on to work at the Ministry of Finance. Between 1924 and 1934, he served as head of the Treasury and in that position had to deal with the major crises of the time -the Shōwa financial crisis and Japan's abandonment of the Gold Standard. Though Tomita was seen by many as one of the rising stars within the Ministry, he was barred from becoming a minister because of his refusal to align himself with the Kurada faction within the ministry. In 1936, he left the ministry taking up a leading position with the Manchurian Development Bank [満州興業銀行]. After the war, he briefly returned to work for the Ministry of Finance in an advisory position. Tomita was a member of Nakano's Tōhōkai think tank in the early 1920s. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 235.)

**Tōyama Mitsuru** [頭山満] (1855 - 1944), *right-wing political leader, advocate of Japanese expansion on the Asian continent and a founder of such ultra-nationalist groups as the Genyōsha*. Born in Fukuoka city as the son of Tsutsui Kamesaku [筒井亀策], he was subsequently adopted into the Tōyama family. He enrolled in Takaba Osamu's Ginseng-Field School at the age of 17. Tōyama supported SaigōTakamori's Satsuma rebellion, participated in the Hagi Revolt of 1876 and was subsequently imprisoned. After being released from prison, Tōyama visited Itagaki Taisuke and joined the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. In 1879, together with Hiraoka Kōtarō [平岡浩太郎] and Hakoda Rokusuke [箱田六輔], he founded the

Kōyōsha [向陽社], a society supporting the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. In 1881, the Kōyōsha changed its name to Genyōsha and initially was headed by Tōyama's friend Hiraoka Kōtarō. This society started off pro-people's rights, but with the passing of time it became more right wing. It promoted the cause of Japanese expansion on the Asian mainland and interfered violently in the 1892 general election on behalf of the government. Implicated in the attempted assassination of Foreign Minister Okuma Shigenobu in 1889, Tōyama was known and feared as a behind-the-scenes manipulator in Japanese politics. He strongly favored establishment of Japanese control over Manchuria; in this connection, he supported the formation of the Kokuryūkai [Amur River Society] by Uchida Ryōhei in 1901 and also became a member of the anti-Russian Tairo Dōshikai [対露同志会] when it was formed in 1903. He gave support to Sun Yat-sen and when the revolution of 1911 occurred, he traveled to China as an advisor to the government. Following the Chinese revolution, Tōyama came to have great influence as a behind-the-scenes manipulator of Japan's Asia policy and domestic politics. Although Tōyama was in retirement during WW2, he maintained his standing as the grand old man of Japanese nationalism, reigning over right-wing groups such as the Genyōsha and the Amur River Society, which he helped bring into existence. Though he never was in any official position of power, he had always great influence while remaining beyond the reach of the government. Tōyama supported, and at times harbored, many foreign exiles (Sun Yat-sen, Ras Bihari Bose, etc.) as well as Japanese who were persecuted by their government. (See History of the Genyōsha [玄洋社社史] edited by Genyōsha History Editorial Committee [玄洋社社史編纂会], Fukuoka, 1992 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1 p. 19-20, 44-62, 111-13, 152-55, 166, 219-22, 722-26, and vol. 2, p. 381-83 and 412-13.)

**Tsuda Shingo** [津田信吾] (1881 - 1948), *businessman and financial supporter of Nakano's*. Born in Aichi prefecture, Tsuda graduated from Keiō University. In 1930, he became



president of Kanegafuchi Spinning Company and was later president of the Greater Japan Spinning Association. (See Nakano Yasuo vol. 2, p. 267, 282, 498, and 963.)

**Tsukui Tatsuo** [津久井竜雄]: (1901 - 1989), *right-wing political activist*. Born in Ibaragi-ken as the first son of Tsukui Hikojirō, Tsukui enrolled in the faculty of literature of Waseda University but withdrew before graduating. He then entered the *Osaka Kon'nichi Shimbun* [大阪今日新聞] in 1924, where he met and became a student of Takabatake Motoyuki [高畠素之], originally a leftist thinker who after WW1 turned right. Later Tsukui worked as reporter for the *Nihon Shimbun* [日本新聞] and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* [読売新聞]. Following the recommendation of Takabatake, he became secretary general of the National Construction Society [建国会] in 1926. After the death of Takabatake in 1928, he distanced himself from the society and founded the Radical Patriotic Workers League [急進愛国労働者総連盟] and the Radical Patriotic Party [急進愛国党]. In 1931, he participated in the foundation of the All-Japan Association for the Common Struggle of Patriots [全日本愛国者共同闘争協議会] (organ: *Kōmin Shimbun* [興民新聞]). Later he founded, with Akamatsu Katsumaro, the People's Association [国民協会] and published the monthly magazine *Popular Movement* [国民運動]. Starting from 1937, he worked on the editorial staff of the *Yamato Shimbun*. In 1943, he was elected for the first time into the Tokyo city parliament. After WW2 he was prosecuted but he was released in 1951. Thereafter he published the magazine *National Opinion* [国論]. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 548.)

**Tsurumi Yūsuke** [鶴見祐輔] (1885 - 1973), *politician*. Born in Okayama prefecture, Tsurumi studied at Tokyo Imperial University and was adopted into the family of Gotō Shimpei. After serving in the Ministry of Railways, he was elected to the Diet in 1928 (and subsequently

re-elected three times), belonging initially to the Minseitō. After the war, he belonged to the Japan Progressive Party, the Kaishintō and the Liberal Democratic Party. He served as Minister of Health and Welfare in the first Hatoyama cabinet. During the 1920s, he contributed articles to Nakano's magazines. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 354.)

**Uchida Ryōhei** [内田良平] (1874 - 1937), *ultranationalist leader*. Born in Fukuoka Prefecture, Uchida entered the Genyōsha as a youth and soon became the leading disciple of Tōyama Mitsuru. When the Tonghak Rebellion broke out in Korea in 1894, Uchida went to help the rebels. In 1901, he founded an ultranationalist organization, the Amur River Society, to press the government to adopt a strong policy toward Russia. In 1903, he joined the Tairo Dōshikai, a political association formed to advocate war with Russia. Following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, Uchida called for the annexation of Korea. During the Taishō and early Shōwa periods, he turned his attention to attacking liberal currents at home. He was arrested in 1925 on suspicion of plotting to assassinate Prime Minister Katō Kōmei but was found innocent. In the 1924 general election, he ran against Nakano but withdrew and was succeeded by Miyagawa Ikkan, Nakano's rival. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 375-81 and vol. 2, p. 205.)

**Ukita Kazutami** (or Watami?) [浮田和民] (1860 - 1946), *professor of Nakano's at Waseda University*. Born as the son of a samurai of Kumamoto-han, Ukita was baptized and raised Christian. After studying philosophy and theology at Dōshisha [同志社], he taught history, political science and constitutional law at that same school over the next 11 years. During that time he also spent two years at Yale University studying history, politics and sociology. He left Dōshisha in 1897 and took up a position at Waseda University (then still named Tokyo Senmon Gakkō), where in the course of the next 44 years he taught history and political science and was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the university's political science department.

Advocating human rights, liberal democracy, constitutionalism, parliamentary representation, universal suffrage, and women's emancipation, he contributed to and eventually edited the liberal democratic magazine "Sun" [太陽] between 1909 and 1919. Counted among the pioneers of Taishō Democracy, he is sometimes even credited with being the first Japanese to advocate democracy [民主主義], influencing Yoshino Sakuzō and others. His major writings include "Logical Imperialism" [倫理的帝国主義], "Outline of Political Science" [政治学概論], and "Against War between Japan and America" [日米非戦論]. Even after Nakano's graduation from Waseda, Ukita continued to support Nakano's journalistic work, writing prefaces and introductions to the latter's books and recommending new topics. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 75, 85-86, 104, 195, 388, 464, 686, and 714.)

**Ushijima Tokutarō [牛嶋徳太郎]** (1951? - ?), *right-wing activist of the post-WW2 period.*

Born in Fukuoka prefecture, Ushijima graduated first from the West Japan Junior College before going on to Waseda University's department of politics and economics and then starting a doctorate in the history of modern Japanese political thought. He tried to enter Mishima Yukio's Tate-no-kai [楯の会] but was rejected for physical reasons. Working as editor of "Jasco" [ジャスコ], the organ of a racist student organization by the name "Japan Student Conference" [日本学生会議], Ushijima came to embrace German Nazism and Italian Fascism. During trips to Germany, he came into contact with the "conservative revolution" school of thought around Armin Mohler (1920-2003) and developed a keen interest in the left wing of the Nazi party (he never showed any interest in the neo-Nazis.) In the 1970s, Ushijima became a prominent critic of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. With the support and backing of Shintō Kazuma (Nakano's former secretary, later president of the Genyōsha and mayor of Fukuoka-city), Ushijima relaunched the Tōhōkai's Tōtairiku magazine.

**Uzaki Rojō** [鵜崎鷺城] (1873 - 1934), *journalist and critic also known under his actual first name, Kumakichi* [熊吉]. Born in Hyōgo prefecture, Uzaki attended Waseda University and subsequently worked for the *Tokyo Daily News* [東京日日新聞], covering military affairs and politics. In 1910, he joined Inukai's Kokumintō and became known for his critical articles published in magazines such as *Japan and the Japanese*, *Chūō Kōron*, and *Tōhōjiron*. He also wrote a biography of Inukai Tsuyoshi. Uzaki occasionally contributed to Nakano's magazine *Tōhōjiron*.

**Wakugami Rōjin** [湧上顰人] (1888 - 1966), *activist and politician*. Born in Okinawa prefecture, Wakugami lost much of his hearing as a child. While a student at Waseda University, he was greatly attracted to the socialist thought of Abe Isoo. Wakugami withdrew from university and joined the socialist movement. In 1931, he founded Okinawa Dōjin Hospital [沖縄同仁病院]. Running as a non-endorsed candidate for the Tōhōkai in 1942, he was elected to the Diet. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-35 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 466)

**Wang Yang-ming** (王阳明, 1472 - 1529), *Ming Chinese idealist, Neo-Confucian philosopher, educator, General, and bureaucrat*. Born in Yuyao, Zhejiang Province, Wang followed the career of his father, passing the Chinese bureaucratic examinations and serving the government until he was driven out of office in 1506. Later he was reinstated, serving as governor of Jiangxi, a position that earned him a reputation as able military leader in the suppression of a number of rebellions. Marginalized during his lifetime for his opposition to the orthodox teachings of Zhu Xi, Wang's philosophy was appreciated fully only after his death. Two ideas stand out from his teachings. First, Wang presupposed that by nature man was morally good and had innate knowledge of good and evil. Accordingly, moral understanding could not be found

in the outside world, but rather through meditative introspection and following one's intuition. Second, Wang rejected the existence of moral understanding without action. His concept of the unity of knowledge and action [知行一致] held that knowledge was gained, even perfected, in the process of action. In making the individual master of his or her moral judgment, Wang's first idea is emancipatory and egalitarian. The second idea implies a rebellious, at times revolutionary, drive in that it bestows not only the right but the duty for action independent of and against outside authority.

**Wang Ching-wei** [汪兆銘] (1883 - 1944), *Chinese politician*. Born in Canton, Wang studied at Hōsei University in Japan. There he entered the Chinese revolutionary league and met with Sun Yat-sen. After the foundation of the Nationalist party, he became one of its leading members. Initially a member of the party's left wing, he took a pro-Japanese and anti-communist position after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1937. After fleeing from Chungking, he founded a Japan-friendly (puppet) government in Nanking in March 1940. He died of a lung disease in Nagoya in 1943. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 480-81, and vol. 2, p. 89-92, 263, 353, 384, 388, 407, and 693.)

**Washizawa Yoshiji** [鷺沢与四二] (1883 - ?), *politician and member of the Nakano faction within the Kokumin Dōmei*. Born in Nagano prefecture, Washizawa graduated from Keiō University majoring in political science, then became a reporter for the *Jiji News* [時事新報]. As a correspondent of that paper, he was sent to Beijing, where he founded his own newspaper. He later worked as a businessman and an advisor on Chinese affairs. After leaving the Kokumin Dōmei together with Nakano, he joined the Tōhōkai. Washizawa ran as a candidate of the Tōhōkai in 1942 but lost. (See Nagai Kazuo, "The Foundation of the Tōhōkai" [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 125 note 8, 130-34, and Nakano Yasuo,

vol. 1, p. 738-39.)

**Watanabe Tadao** [渡辺忠雄] (1898 - 2005), *banker and member of the Tōhōkai think tank.*

Born in Hokkaidō, Watanabe studied at Tokyo Imperial University before entering the Bank of Japan. After the war, he switched to Mitsuwa Bank, becoming its director in 1947 and president in 1960. Under the slogan “People’s Bank,” he tried to turn the bank into one that catered to mass consumers.

**Watanabe Yasukuni** [渡辺泰邦] (1891 - ?), *politician and member of the Tōhōkai.* Born in Hokkaidō, Watanabe studied political economy at Waseda University. He traveled to Europe, America and China. He was a member of parliament and later a member of the Imperial Rule Assistance Central Cooperation Society [大政翼賛会中央協力会]. Watanabe ran successfully as a Tōhōkai candidate in the 1936 and 1937 elections. (See Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 130-35 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 187 and 245.)

**Yamaji (also Yamamichi) Jō'ichi** [山道襄一] (1882 - 1941), *journalist and politician.*

Born in Hiroshima prefecture, Yamaji's career was similar to Nakano's. After graduating from Waseda University in 1906, he initially worked for a couple of provincial newspapers and then entered politics, being elected MP with the Kenseikai (later Minseitō) in 1912. Within the party, he joined the Adachi faction. He served a parliamentary Vice-minister of Education in the Katō and the first Wakatsuki cabinets, and as parliamentary Vice-minister of Railways in the Hamaguchi cabinet. During the movement for a coalition cabinet, Yamaji initially took a passive attitude, not following Adachi and after the scheme failed he worked hard to have Adachi return to the Minseitō. When this failed, Yamaji finally also joined the Kokumin Dōmei and there

became leader of the faction opposing Nakano. In 1935, Yamaji returned to the Minseitō. (See Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 123-25.)

**Yamashita Kamesaburō** [山下亀三郎] (1867 - 1944), *businessman and financial backer of Nakano's*. Born in Aichi prefecture in 1867, Yamashita went to Meiji Law School [明治法律学校], predecessor of today's Meiji University, but he did not graduate. In 1913, he founded Yamashita Shipping, which expanded greatly during WW1 and formed the foundation for the Yamashita Zaibatsu. In 1943, he served as advisor to the Tōjō cabinet. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 576 and 607 and vol. 2, p. 267, 498, and 693.)

**Yasukawa Daigorō** [安川第五郎] (1886 - 1976), *businessman; friend and financial backer of Nakano's*. The fifth son of Fukuoka Coal Baron Yasukawa Kei'ichirō, young Daigorō went to the same Shūyūkan middle school as Nakano and Ogata Taketora, where the three became friends. Unlike the latter two, he went on to study engineering at the Tokyo Imperial University and then took a job with Hitachi Manufacturing. Following an internship at Westinghouse in the U.S., he founded - together with his father and brother - Yasukawa Electric Corporation in 1915, becoming the company's president in 1936. In the post-war period, Yasukawa actively promoted the civilian use of nuclear power in Japan and served as president of Kyūshū Electric Power as well as on the committee of the Tokyo Olympics. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 57, 61, 69, and 154 as well as vol. 2, p. 498.)

**Yasukawa Kei'ichirō** [安川敬一郎] (1849 - 1934), *businessman and father of Nakano's high school classmate, Yasukawa Daigorō*. Born as the fourth son into a samurai family of the Kuroda-han in Fukuoka, he was adopted into the Yasukawa family at the age of 16. After

studying in Kyōto and Shizuoka, Yasukawa returned to Fukuoka in 1871 after his one of his brothers was implicated in counterfeiting money for the domain and forced to commit *seppuku*. In the same year, he returned to Tokyo and entered Keiō University. After receiving news that another of his brothers had fallen in the Saga rebellion of 1874, he returned to Fukuoka for good and took over the management of the latter's coal mine. With the help of Hiraoka Kōtarō, he later developed the Akaike coal mine. As a manager, Yasukawa was known for investing in areas outside the narrow confines of coal mining, such as Yasukawa Seisakusho, Kyūshū Steel [九州製鉄 later taken over by Yawata Steel], Yasukawa Electric Corporation [安川電機], and the Yasukawa Steel works, laying the foundation for the Yasukawa Zaibatsu. In 1907, he founded the Meiji Vocational School located in northern Fukuoka, which later became Kyūshū Engineering University. Awarded the title of Baron in 1920, Yasukawa retired from business in 1920. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 153-5, 168-69, 191, 206, 219-21, and 235.)

**Yoshida Isokichi** [吉田磯吉] (1867 - 1936), *businessman from Chikuzen (present-day Fukuoka prefecture) who made a fortune in the coal business and later became a politician*. Elected to the Diet in 1915, he held his seat until 1932. Yoshida acted as advisor to the *Kyūshū Nippō* when Nakano took over the management of the paper in 1928. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 464 and 489.)

**Yoshida Minoru** [吉田実] (1910 - 1982), *politician and Tōhōkai member*. Born in Toyama prefecture, Yoshida studied agriculture at Kyūshū and Tokyo Imperial University and joined the Tōhōkai. After the war, he served as mayor of his native Ōshima-city and then served four terms as provincial governor. In 1969 and 1974, he was elected to the Diet as a member of the LDP.

**Yugeta Sei'ichi** [弓削田精一] (1869? - 1937), *journalist and Nakano's mentor at the*



*Asahi News*. Born in Gunma prefecture into the family of a Confucian scholar, Yugeta studied at Dōshisha University [同志社大学]. He entered the *Asahi News* in 1896 and gained some journalistic fame for reporting from the front lines during the Russo-Japanese war. He left the *Asahi* in 1915 and thereafter became an independent author. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 86, 103-116, 154-55, 206, 383, and 554.)

**Yusa Kōhei** [遊佐幸平] (1883 - 1966) *army officer; accomplished horseback rider and Nakano's riding instructor*. Born in Miyasaki prefecture, Yusa graduated from the Army Academy. As a cavalry officer, Yusa traveled to France to study horsemanship and later represented Japan five times at the Olympics. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 79 and p. 103, 202, 528, and 806.)

**Yutani Yoshiharu** [由谷義治] (1888 - 1958), *politician and honorary citizen of Tottori city*. Born in Tottori city, Yutani came from a wealthy property-owning family, but already in middle school became an ardent reader of the weekly *Common People's Newspaper* [平民新聞]. After graduating from high school, he enrolled at Waseda University but withdrew in 1907 before graduating and returned to Tottori, where he managed a transport/delivery service. During WW1, he became the leader of the Tottori-city Youth Love of the City Association [鳥取市青年愛市団] (later the Tottori Constitutional Youth Association [鳥取立憲青年会]), which advocated universal suffrage and city management of electricity. After sitting in the city and provincial assembly, he was elected to the lower house in 1924 for the first time (initially affiliated with the Kenseikai). Including the election for the IRAA he was elected a total of six times to the Lower House. After the Kenseikai merged with the Seiyū-Hontō in 1927 to form the Minseitō, Yutani (like Nakano) belonged to the Adachi faction. He left the Minseitō with Adachi and Nakano to form the National League. When in 1935-6 Nakano left the National League [国民同盟] to form the Tōhōkai, Yutani followed. He was successfully elected in 1936 and 1937. He left the Tōhōkai

after the failed merger with the Social Mass Party in 1939. During the war, he was elected to the Diet as an officially recommended IRAA candidate. After the war, he participated in the foundation of the Japan Progressive Party [日本進歩党] before being banned from public life by occupation forces in 1946. After the ban was lifted, he supported the Communist Party. Even though in the course of his life he went from extreme right to extreme left, a common thread seems to be his desire for social justice. (See Nagai Kazuo, “The Foundation of the Tōhōkai” [東方会の成立] in *Journal of History* [史林], July 1978, vol. 61, no.4; p. 115, 130-34 and Nakano Yasuo, vol. 2, p. 245, and 370-86).

**Zhang Bing-lin** [章炳麟] (1869 - 1936), *thinker and politician of the late imperial and early republican China*. He was first imprisoned in China for spreading revolutionary thought and later fled to Japan, where he became the publisher of the *Mimpō*. After the revolution of 1911, he briefly served in the republican government. (See Nakano Yasuo, vol. 1, p. 112 and 721.)

**Zheng Xiao-xu** [鄭孝胥] (1860 - 1938), *Chinese statesman and diplomat whom Nakano met while traveling through China in 1918*. Born in Suzhou, Jiangsu, Zheng obtained the intermediate degree in the imperial examinations. Between 1891 and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-05, he served as a diplomat in Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe, meeting influential politicians such as Ito Hirobumi. Zheng continued to serve in the Qing administration until the Chinese revolution of 1911. Remaining loyal to the Qing, he withdrew from public life and continued to criticize the Chinese nationalist government. In the 1920s, Zheng cooperated with the Genyōsha-affiliated Kokuryūkai to have the last Qing emperor, Puyi, restored in Manchuria. After the Manchurian Incident, Zheng was instrumental in establishing the Japanese puppet state and was rewarded with the position of Prime Minister of that state. As Prime Minister, Zheng soon ran into conflict with the Japanese military authorities, causing him to

resign from his office in 1935. He died under mysterious circumstances in 1938.